

I have spoken to many women who share these views on this issue. We now have a new bill before us for consideration. There is always room for improvement, and I intend to support amendments which seek to do just that: Improve the bill.

I would like to add, honourable senators, that many women who have spoken to me worry about the cost of the implementation of this new legislation. They ask: Would this money not be better spent on homes for battered women and children and on funding the child care package promised by the Liberals in their infamous Red Book, a concrete measure which would allow women to be freer to make choices for the overall betterment of their own lives and the lives of their children?

**Hon. Lorna Milne:** Honourable senators, in my speech yesterday, I had my eye on the clock, and I was unable to put on the record some thoughtful words we heard in committee on Bill C-68. I will take a moment to draw your attention to them.

The committee heard from the Honourable Alan Buchanan, Attorney General of Prince Edward Island. His words were echoed by his federal counterpart last week, and I think they bear repeating. He said:

I am a Canadian and I believe that this bill is an important legislative expression of what it means to be a Canadian. I believe the bill to be a timely reaffirmation of the essential beliefs and values that set us aside as a civilized nation.

He added later:

I am convinced that our long-standing cultural tradition as peaceful and law-abiding people is a fundamental part of our national character, a priceless badge of honour, and we should do everything possible to...strengthen this tradition. The federal government's legislation does precisely that and as a Canadian and as a parliamentarian I am pleased to support this legislative initiative...

Honourable senators, I agree with Mr. Buchanan, and I believe that his words should be reflected upon by all members of this house.

**Hon. Pat Carney:** Honourable senators, I too wish to address the firearms legislation that is before us this afternoon. I attended meetings recently in Vancouver to hear from people who feel they will be affected by Bill C-68, meetings that were called by my B.C. colleague Gerry St. Germain and attended by Senator Ghitter and others. I thought it would be timely to share with you some of the concerns expressed at those hearings.

Honourable senators, most of us in this chamber do, of course, support gun control. In 1991, our Conservative government, under then justice minister Kim Campbell, brought in the most extensive firearms legislation in existence in the recent past.

I have checked with our Vancouver police officer, and he finds that legislation quite effective. The officer in charge of firearms

permits says he turns down about 10 to 20 per cent of requests for firearms certificates on the basis of that legislation. The man on parole does not get a licence; the man going bankrupt does not get a licence; a person showing signs of depression does not get a licence — in other words, we have effective legislation.

I wanted to mention some of the concerns from our hearings. A very important one was the effect that this legislation will have on aboriginal rights. One of the most effective agencies in my province is the Indian Homemakers of B.C. It is an advocate for women and children and a group that, I thought, would support this legislation. At the hearings, its president spoke to the contrary. It opposes this legislation because it feels the provisions in Bill C-68 will increase the level of violence against women and children among First Nations. That was disturbing to me.

Other concerns related to the impact of this legislation on international competition. As honourable senators know, the head coach of the Canadian Olympic team says that the provisions in this bill, whether by design or accident, would impede our ability to compete in the Olympic Games and the Pan-American Games. The Commonwealth Games could not have been held in Victoria had this legislation been in place. There is concern that an activity which is a recreational sport and an international sport to many Canadians is being unfairly targeted in this bill.

Concerns were raised about the cost imposed by this legislation, the millions upon millions of dollars that witnesses said should go to child care, violence against women, shelters, and policing activities against criminal elements. That is a very real concern.

There was concern that law-abiding Canadians could be found in violation of a minor infringement under this legislation, and could actually go to jail on a second offence. As one ex-police officer said at the hearings, "If we are not the target, why do we have to pay the price?"

Concern was expressed about the harshness of the penalties contained in the bill. It was pointed out that under this legislation the minimum penalties for failure to register a gun would be harsher than those for manslaughter or attempted murder. That is considered to be an inequitable application of the law in our part of the country.

There are concerns about hobbies. People interested in our history like to re-enact battles and feel they will be targeted by this legislation.

Some people were concerned about museums. Normally, we do not consider museums to be a hotbed of criminal activity, but museums say that they will be required to pay about \$4 million in fees under this legislation.

There is concern that antique guns are included in this legislation. As we were told at the Vancouver hearings, there is no record of a 7-Eleven convenience store being shot up by anyone using a 200-year-old musket.