

Criminal Code

the substantial work done in committee on both Bill C-83 and Bill C-51, and in spite of the improvements resulting from the various amendments, this new bill will not do what all of us want, that is, take firearms out of the hands of criminals.

I received only about 50 letters on this bill, a small number in comparison to the number received on the earlier bill. About half of that 50 were from my constituents and the other half from all over western Canada.

I should like to put my personal views on record regarding the wiretapping provisions of the bill. There is no question that today our society is very disturbed and concerned about the frightening evidence of organized and unorganized crime in Canada. How far should we go in our efforts to combat this upsurge in crime?

I am equally concerned about the civil rights aspects, the invasion of our private rights in our homes. Recent high level break-ins—official or otherwise—pinpoint the need for a very high level assessment of our criminal laws as well as the political direction and responsibility of our police and security forces. We are not going to get this protection from the wiretapping provisions of this bill.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, a very appropriate letter appeared in this morning's *Globe and Mail* on the subject of gun control, written by a former member of this House. It is a short letter, under the heading "Gun control" and reads as follows:

Gun control

Justice Minister Ronald Basford is quoted (Officer Slain, Six Wounded in Ottawa—July 12), as indicating that the slaying of an Ottawa policeman should "get Parliament and the Opposition moving to pass a bill we have been trying to get through for 18 months."

On Feb. 5, 1973, as an opposition member in the 29th Parliament, I asked the then Minister of Justice, (Otto Lang) if, in view of the shooting down of a third Toronto policeman, he would consider implementing the suggestions made by the Policemen's Association, regarding the ownership and registration of firearms in Canada.

He answered: "The problem is that regulations in relation to firearms most certainly interfere with the ordinary activities of a lot of law-abiding citizens, whereas in no way are they certain to interfere with the activities of criminals."

Mr. Basford was a member of the Government who supported that policy and made no protest. That was four years ago.

Reg Stackhouse

Toronto

It seems appropriate to conclude by pointing out the utter futility of the package concept in preparing legislation of this type. If the five parts of this bill had been split into at least two bills we could have been finished with both gun control and wiretapping long ago.

I cannot support this package bill, Mr. Speaker, mainly because of the government's proposals on gun control and wiretapping.

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief but I want to go on record as saying I intend to support my party and oppose this bill. Had the bill been split it could have been passed two years ago and this legislation would not now be before us.

[Mr. Hargrave.]

It seems to me that in some of the speeches there has been a tendency to malign the police forces of this country. Some wild charges have been made about what the police will do with wiretaps—that they will use illegal wiretaps and engage in nefarious schemes, skullduggery, and other things that are objectionable. I disagree with such accusations, Mr. Speaker. I have probably had no more than the average number of encounters with the Ontario Provincial Police who service a number of municipalities in my riding. I may get the odd speeding ticket, and that is the sum of my encounters with them. Much the same applies to the RCMP. We see the RCMP on ceremonial occasions and know of some of the work they do. I have a personal relationship with a senior officer of the force who grew up next door to me. He is a sterling character; I know his family, and hope some of the accusations levelled against the RCMP will be cleared up during the forthcoming inquiry.

● (2020)

I resent some of the things some hon. members have said about our police forces. Let me say that in the small area I represent our police forces are not villains. They are the protectors of our people. I sat four years on the board of police commissioners of the city of Belleville and I can tell you that Chief Doug Crosbie heads one of the finest police forces in all Canada. I am not ashamed to say I had a hand in hiring him, but I do not single him out particularly, because chiefs before him were also good. Let me also mention Carl Beattie, chief of the police force in Deseronto. When they have a barbeque at the Lion's Club, or when there is work to do at the arena, to get ready for the kids on Saturday morning, Carl is one of the boys; but everyone in the village knows that on Saturday night, when Carl Beattie is on duty, you had better not drive down the main street of Deseronto faster than you should, or carry a mickey in your hip pocket, because Carl will put you in the clink as quick as a wink.

The same is true of Charlie Fletcher in Picton. I have an Indian reserve in my riding, one of the few with its own police force. When there is a problem in Shannonville, or on the Tyendwaga reserve, Tom Maracle comes up and talks to the people. If it is an Indian problem he straightens it out.

Those kind of people protect people in my part of the country. Mr. Speaker, I submit many hon. members who have spoken recently, barring the hon. member who spoke before me and dealt with a specific part of the bill, have come dangerously close to imputing serious crimes to police forces in Canada. I object. In my opinion these small police forces will not engage in undue wiretapping. I guarantee it. Small communities never have enough money for equipment and men. They do not have enough men for wiretapping, or for the sort of wiretapping they might like to do. The municipal police budgets are never large enough to enable the police forces to do the job they want to do. Those forces are equipped with the best equipment it is possible to obtain for them in the circumstances. They try to buy equipment as good as they can afford, and keep their training methods up to date. But they make a