

*Government Orders*

might vary slightly, since mistakes are always possible. But we are talking here of an average of \$24 million a year over five years, for a five-year total of about \$119-120 million. Once the registration system is in place and rolling, it will obviously cost less to manage.

Yes, it will cost, but its price does not seem disproportionate to its significance for society, compared to other initiatives which cost much more and amount to very little. Moreover, I was always a bit surprised by the intense opposition, given the benefits for individuals. Let us think about what this act means to an individual, a citizen, for someone who, for instance, goes hunting once a year or keeps three or four firearms at home, maybe a .12, .22 or .20 caliber shotgun. This worried citizen, perhaps made anxious by all the commotion raised by the lobbies, should know what will happen, what this act means.

If the act were passed tonight, what changes does it entail for this person who keeps three firearms at home? There will be absolutely no changes for three years, nothing in 1995, 1996 or 1997, right up to 1998. Then, starting in 1998, that person will have five years to register up to 10 arms all at once, for \$10. Now tell me, is it worth putting a country to fire and the sword? There has been much exaggeration. Canadian citizens are used to dealing with much bigger complexities and to co-operate much more with government. This is not a case of undue harassment. This is within reasonable limits, in my estimation.

[English]

This debate has pitted people against each other in good faith. Without that, very important principles were at stake, collective principles: the need to address the issue of violence in Canada and in Quebec and, on the other hand, the propensity to protect individual rights. Those are very legitimate questions. All those people are very honourable people and they defend and protect quite legitimate values.

We have to make a judgment, an assessment of those values. In last resort when we think it over calmly and quietly as good citizens, we will have to conclude that it is the right law, the right move to make. It is not the best law. Many things could have been done to improve it. We tried. We succeeded in certain cases; we did not succeed all the time. On the whole there is a balance. If we want to protect our society against the rise in violence we have to do something like that.

For private citizens the negative effects will not be very great. It means that an individual who has three, four, five or ten hunting rifles at home will have nothing to do for the next three years. Starting in 1998 he will have to think about the fact that he will have to register his arms. He will have five years to do it from 1998. Once it is done it will be for life and it will cost \$10.

I do not think there is a need for the kind of debate that we have on many other issues in Canada. There will be a much harsher debate this fall. It would be good practice now to accept this as a reasonable question to settle before addressing much more important questions.

• (1110)

[Translation]

The Bloc Québécois is not entirely satisfied with the act, but its members believe that respect is a matter of striking the right social balance and that, in the common interest, they must vote in favour of the act. This is what we intend to do tonight.

[English]

**Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we sat here until eleven o'clock last night and voted on the final amendments to Bill C-68. In less than 24 hours we are into our final debate, third reading of the bill. It did not really give us much time to assess the consequences of the amendments which are now part of the bill. It reminds me a little of what happened in the clause by clause amendments that were hurried upon us with such short notice after the final witnesses before the committee had concluded.

I begin my address by telling the House and the justice minister of a firearms court case that was heard in Alberta. The judge was a man by the name of Judge Demetrick. In his decision he said that the definition of a firearm as contained presently in the Criminal Code was so convoluted as to be legal fiction and twice removed from reality. When I read that I was absolutely amazed that the Parliament of Canada was producing legislation that our courts are now declaring to be twice removed from reality. I am satisfied that we cannot have legislation that is twice removed from reality unless we have thinking behind the legislation that is twice removed from reality as well.

The present gun control bill is really not a gun control bill at all. It is not going to control guns; it is simply going to register them. When I looked at the bill I realized that it was not an aberration from the good sound thinking that has run the country for the last 25 years. It is not unlike Judge Demetrick pointed out. What has been guiding the country for the last 25 years? When we examine the debt, the Young Offenders Act, the parole system or the judicial system, and some of the disparities in those systems we wonder whether or not the thinking behind them is twice removed from reality.

How can we be in a situation where we are \$600 billion in debt if the thinking behind our fiscal and monetary policy is not twice removed from reality? How can we have a Young Offenders Act when the justice system cannot deal with young offenders under the age of 12 for their criminal misconduct? How can we have