

She said, for example, that she avoided implementation of a gun registry, citing a lack of funding as an excuse, and said that in a time of fiscal restraint this government prefers to concentrate the available gun control resources in those areas of the system that will provide real benefits to firearm users and to the public.

That seems a little strange. I would be concerned that a future Prime Minister would not be interested in a mandatory registration of guns in a country like Canada.

I would like to mention the position that our critic took in the committee and in a minority report which he wrote. He said: "Let us target hand-guns and then get back to paramilitary weapons". He was particularly concerned about paramilitary weapons. "These are not for hunters, these are paramilitary weapons that are flowing into Canada. When people buy guns, surely with modern cash registers and computers, we can take a record and send it to the RCMP."

He goes on to say: "We do not need these high powered guns. We do not need them flooding this country. We need some controls. Surely we must have a registration system for future guns so we know where they are and how armed our population is. If they are lost, stolen or get into criminal hands, we can then deal with them". Certainly, we are in support of this bill which spells this out further.

He also said in a later minority report, again particularly being concerned about semi-automatic weapons: "As restriction of semi-automatic weapons under the present law would effectively prohibit hunting activities, I recommend that all unrestricted semi-automatic weapons be registered as a separate class of weapons. Gun owners would also benefit as their valuable firearms would be better protected against theft. Numerous witnesses before the special committee recommended a full national registry system for every firearm in Canada".

He goes on to say that he supports the following proposal which was suggested by some members of the committee and by most witnesses.

All semi-automatic weapons would be registered. All future firearms obtained using the FAC would also be

registered at the time of purchase. Finally, every applicant for an FAC would be required to list all their firearms on the applications. This would not place any additional bureaucratic burden on firearm owners with non semi-automatic rifles who do not need an FAC at present. This would move us toward a long-term goal of a full national registry system.

I want to say again that we will support this bill. I will not take the time today to quote this, but I notice in reading over some of the reference materials that certainly the coalition for gun control had a very strong position on this question. The Canadian Police Association said the association has over the past several months conducted an informal survey of the business community. Over 90 per cent of the respondents believe that guns of all kinds should be registered and that there should be a minimum age and compulsory training requirement in order to own a gun of any kind.

• (1735)

The chief of police of metro Toronto had a more detailed brief. I would like to conclude my remarks by including his comments about a national firearms registry. He believes this concept to be sound, reasonable, and workable, yet there is no mention of it in Bill C-17. Neither was it addressed in the special committee's report. It is hard looking back from this perspective to understand why it was not dealt with at that time and not dealt with by the minister. The police chief feels that if it is possible to control and register motor vehicles and domestic animal pets of which there are far more, surely it is possible to register all firearms in Canada. It is noteworthy to learn that the Government of Canada has recently added its name and support to a group of other nations in establishing a world-wide registry control of weapons of war.

The stated intent of this philosophy is to monitor the proliferation and extent of such weapons. Surely this concept could be applied here in Canada where the proliferation of and the accessibility to all firearms has become alarming. Let us get our own house in order first.