

What about the notion of arming for self-defence? The idea has been discredited. In fact, studies show that people with guns in their homes are 43 times more likely to kill themselves or someone close to them than to kill an intruder. An alarming study by Dr. Scott of George Washington University shows that for every woman who buys a handgun for self-protection, 239 women are murdered by such weapons, many with their own weapon.

• (1725)

There was a very instructive study by the Swiss professor Martin Killias in a May 1993 article in the *Canadian Medical Journal*. Dr. Killias is very clear on one point: gun ownership directly correlates with gun deaths and gun injury. Noting that 27 per cent of Swiss households have guns, about the same incidence as in Canada, he writes: "Contrary to what gun organizations claim, Switzerland pays a high price for this. In suicide, Switzerland ranks third, just behind Hungary and Finland, but far higher than other countries." The reason for this is "the unusually high percentage of suicides committed with firearms".

Dr. Killias' conclusions are confirmed in a similar 1993 study of 18 countries for the United Nations Inter-regional Crime and Justice Institute. Countries such as Great Britain and Germany, which strictly control access to firearms, have much lower death rates by firearms than Canada or the United States.

Gun registration is the rule throughout Europe: in Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Holland, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. Canada and the United States are the exceptions.

What about public support for this bill? I have over 7,000 pieces of mail supporting this bill forwarded to me as an Ontario member by Wendy Cukier and Heidi Rathjen of the Coalition for Gun Control. I especially wish to commend these two remarkable women for so effectively giving voice to the concerns of such a broad cross-section of groups, including police organizations, medical associations, churches, women's shelters and transition houses, teachers federations, municipal councils, including my own, universities, boards of education, labour groups, provincial bars and legal associations and, most important, the overwhelming majority of the Canadian people.

One of my constituents, Dr. Henry Barnett, the most prominent neurologist in Canada, spoke to me about his colleagues south of the border, about their hopes for effective gun control and about their discouragement and their complete inability to effect legislative change in the face of the opposition of the National Rifle Association, America's largest and most influential lobby group.

Let us make no mistake, the American ultra-right are watching this debate very closely. This debate involves more than

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guns. It is about our way of life, our freedom. It is about the right of Canadians to say no to guns. It is about our right to decide how we want to live.

Opposing the bill we have primarily gun clubs, gun sellers, gun collectors, hunters and outfitters, native peoples, and the Reform Party. To further their own agenda or to protect their own economic interest, some groups capitalize on the fears of their honest and law-abiding members. These self-styled advocacy groups, these so-called responsible firearms groups, have engaged in a deliberate campaign of misinformation. Every time the government proposes gun control, these same groups come out. The same accusations are made: police state, confiscation. But the confiscations do not occur. The police do not come out in the middle of the night.

"Punish the criminal", they say, "not the responsible law-abiding gun owner". "It is just another tax grab". Let us not ignore the real cost of guns. When law-abiding, responsible gun owners kill and injure themselves and others, aside from the lost lives of 1,400 Canadians there is a very real dollar figure, \$70 million a year in primary health costs and related public services in this country paid for by Canadian taxpayers.

They complain at the inconvenience of having to register, of having to fill out forms. I remember one witness who came before the committee whose daughter had been shot dead by a long gun recalling her response to a provincial attorney general on the subject of inconvenience: "Let me tell you about inconvenience. The death of your child at the hands of a man wielding a gun is an inconvenience. Do you know how many forms I have had to fill out?" I will always remember that woman's voice.

The cost to the gun owner is nominal. It is \$10 to register up to 10 guns, no cost whatsoever to subsistence hunters. Is this an oppressive or punitive tax? Does this in any way impede the gun owner's right to use and enjoy his weapon? Not in the least.

Every time gun controls are brought forward, the same argument is heard: "You will destroy hunting. You will cripple our outfitting industry, on which our remote communities depend." The argument is a red herring. Gun control has no effect whatsoever on a hunter's decision to obtain a hunting licence.

This is Parliament's fourth gun control bill, and our hunting and sports shooting community is in fine shape. In fact, it is stronger, safer, and more responsible than its American counterpart.

• (1730)

We do have gun clubs but we do not have civilian militias. Canadians understand gun ownership is a privilege and not a right. The government is prepared to safeguard that privilege but only if it is clearly understood privilege demands responsibility.