

That this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-68, an act respecting firearms and other weapons, because the principle of establishing a system for licensing and registration of all firearms and the principle of creating a variety of offences are two unrelated issues that should be addressed separately.

• (1645)

Maybe they should be addressed separately, but if this motion were passed it would not allow the House to address those two questions separately. If we passed this motion, we would not be dealing with Bill C-68, period. The House would not read Bill C-68 a second time. The House would not refer Bill C-68 to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. Consequently, there would be no Bill C-68 and therefore, there would be nothing to split and nothing to discuss.

In my respectful view, it is improper for members of the Reform Party to suggest that their motion would split this bill. Nothing could be further from the truth. Their motion would have the effect of killing this bill, not splitting it. So let us talk facts.

Members of the Reform Party have made a point of saying that they are talking straight to the people. Then be straight with the people. If they are going to bring a motion that says to kill Bill C-68, then tell people that is the kind of motion they are bringing forward, not that it is a motion to split the bill. That is utter parliamentary nonsense.

Anyone who votes in favour of the amendment thinking that the bill will be split is sadly misinformed. The actual effect of voting for the amendment will be to kill Bill C-68.

If we were to kill Bill C-68 the justice committee would have absolutely no opportunity whatsoever to consider the merits of the bill. It would have no opportunity whatsoever to consider any amendments that could be put forward. It would have no opportunity whatsoever to try to excise some portions of the bill.

Let us be honest with Canadians. If members do not like the bill, then say so. If you do not like the bill, tell Canadians that the amendment would throw the bill out. Do not tell Canadians the bill would be split because that is not the fact.

**Miss Grey:** Is that the end?

**Mr. Wappel:** No, that is not the end.

Let us talk about what will happen if common sense prevails and we send this bill to committee. The bill is not perfect. Nothing that is written in this House is perfect. There are problems with the bill. The Minister of Justice acknowledged in a press release that he would like the committee to consider at least three amendments.

One deals with relics and whether they can be passed on from generation to generation. The second one is how we deal with prohibited classes of weapons that are used for competition. That is a legitimate thing. We can deal with prohibited weapons that might be used for competition. We can put an amendment to

the bill that would permit such a use. There is nothing wrong or impossible about that. The minister has also asked us to look at black powder historical re-enactments.

There are a couple of problems I would like to look at before I have an opportunity to put forward my amendments. I acknowledge that I have an opportunity which is not available to most members. I am a member of the justice committee and I can put forward all kinds of amendments at committee. Then I can put forward more amendments in the House at report stage. I really have two cracks at it, unlike most members, and I acknowledge that.

One problem I have with the bill as it currently stands is the possibility of confiscation without compensation. This is anathema, unilateral. We have to deal with it. We have to look at what the bill actually says and make some hard decisions. In my view, there should be compensation for property that is legally acquired and is subsequently confiscated for the greater public good, if that is what this House decides. We do it with real estate. There is no reason that we cannot do it in this situation.

I would like to hear some evidence on that. I would like to hear the pros and cons. I would like to hear all those people who wish to come to the justice committee to tell us what is wrong or right with it.

• (1650)

I have some problem with the mandatory sentencing. Let us pick a section arbitrarily. Let us pick proposed section 244, which is found in clause 138 of the bill which reads in part:

244. Every person who, with intent

(a) to wound, maim or disfigure any person,

(b) to endanger the life of any person, or

(c) to prevent the arrest or detention of any person,

discharges a firearm at any person—is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years and to a minimum punishment of imprisonment for a term of four years.

What does that mean from a legal point of view? Does that mean if they wound somebody, they will get a sentence for the wounding, then an additional four year consecutive sentence? Or does it mean that if they wound someone and they are found to have wounded someone under that section they will get a sentence of a minimum of four years? There is a huge difference. We have to hear from the justice department officials and other people in the legal field as to exactly what that means.

The perception may be among some in the community that a mandatory four year sentence means four years on top of any sentence for the crime. Others might think it is four years in total. That is called the totality principle. These are legitimate concerns and questions.

There is another legitimate concern. That is the one expressed by members of the Reform Party as to the actual purposes registration would serve. Would registration serve the purpose