

*Criminal Code*

that I have some measure of sympathy for the argument advanced by the sponsor of the bill, the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Leblanc). At the same time, I find that I am in some agreement with the remarks, though perhaps not the manner in which they were advanced, of the hon. member for Macleod (Mr. Kindt). I say that because certainly anything that this house can do within reason to eliminate the misuse of firearms should be done. If amendments to the Criminal Code are a way of doing it effectively, then I would have no objection to that.

However, I have to say that I do not believe the kind of amendment advanced by the hon. member for Laurier will in fact do anything at all to eliminate the misuse of firearms. There is no disagreement about the fact there is a problem that should be dealt with, but the imposition of severe restrictions on the sale and ownership of firearms is not going to do it. I challenge the hon. member for Laurier to produce any statistics to indicate that a firearm purchased from an authorized and licensed dealer has been used by some person to commit a murder or otherwise used in a criminal act.

I think it is a fact that in most cases firearms which have been used for criminal acts have been stolen weapons. Putting this restriction on a large part of the Canadian population is certainly not going to get at the root of the problem, which is to stop the theft of firearms and the misuse of them thereafter. If we are going to accept severe restrictions upon dealers and purchasers of firearms, such as those that have been outlined, I hope we can be given an argument that carries more weight. An argument in the same vein could be advanced, for example, with regard to the sale of automobiles. They kill far more people than firearms and do so consistently every week of every month of every year. There are pieces of equipment or devices commonly used by large numbers of the Canadian population that are extremely dangerous if misused.

● (5:40 p.m.)

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, while the hon. member has had the opportunity of bringing before the house some of the problems involved in connection with the misuse of firearms, I hope he will be unable to convince members of the house that even a small measure of correction of this misuse can be found in bringing in this severe restriction and imposing it upon hundreds of thousands of Canadians who buy firearms and use them properly.

[Mr. Olson.]

**Mr. S. Perry Ryan (Spadina):** Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member for Macleod (Mr. Kindt) I too was a gopher shooter in my boyhood days. I recall very clearly the days I spent in the fields around Crown Hill just outside my home town of Barrie. However, let me say at the outset that the motion moved by the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Leblanc) is, in my humble opinion, a very timely one, and I congratulate him on bringing it forward at his first opportunity even though he may have preferred to be with his delegates and constituents listening to the big and little guns of the Liberal party which are still firing over at the Chateau Laurier.

With increasing population and development in our cities and towns there is added opportunity and temptation to commit crimes of violence. I submit that a review of the law with respect to the carriage, possession, custody and other aspects of firearms and other offensive weapons should be made during the life of this parliament. However, I do not think that all members would agree that a special committee should be formed.

Personally, Mr. Speaker, I think that the subject matter of this motion should be referred to the existing standing committee on justice and legal affairs. I feel that it is exceptionally well equipped under its chairman, the hon. member for High Park (Mr. Cameron), to deal with a subject matter of this kind. While I think there is need for the suggested review, I do not believe there should be any radical disarming of our solid citizens and police officers across the nation.

Police officers in England are not armed but in that country a different situation obtains. They have there a few lonely stretches but they are few and far between. In Canada we have vast areas of uninhabited country consisting of bush and swamp, areas that a man would be foolish to traverse or to inhabit without firearms to defend his person, his family and his possessions.

Furthermore, there are many species of deer, rabbits, varmints and pests that need to be harvested annually or at least occasionally to keep them under control. Perhaps the constituency of Macleod does have a gopher problem, but we all know that Australia certainly has a rabbit problem and that in New Zealand professional hunters are employed all year round to keep the ever-abundant deer population from destroying farmers' crops. They are a real menace there. We do not have to go to the cost of controlling