

of a record of alcoholism, criminality, or mental illness? Consider all the variations in degree that will have to be taken into account. Because of its complexities alone the operation will tend to become either autocratic or else unfair or meaningless.

As for the proposition that killings with long guns would be reduced by this licensing system, it should be remembered that the majority of such killings are committed by persons who would have no trouble getting a licence because before the event they were considered normal citizens. Others likely to be involved in such killings and who are an identifiable threat could be taken care of by different provisions of the criminal law. As for the man who is a threat because he is partially insane or is intermittently unstable and violent, action could be taken to seize all his firearms under section 105, which wisely would be strengthened by this new bill.

I also believe that the qualifications of hunters and marksmen should be left to the provinces where they would be linked to the administration of the game laws and officially recognized gun clubs. Some provinces already have such a program in operation. Others are moving in that direction. I submit this system would not require any great new bureaucratic machine. Qualification would be based on competence and on knowledge of all gun laws and, with its adoption, a card certifying membership in an approved marksmen's club, a hunters' safety course pass certificate, or a hunting licence could be established as authorization for the sale and purchase of a firearm or ammunition.

I belong to a gun club in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, and I am certain the members of our club would be happy to undertake this additional responsibility. Some of the provinces already have such a program in operation and others are moving in that direction. Such a system would not necessitate any big, new bureaucratic machine. The qualification would be based on competence, and at the end of the instruction period a certificate could be issued which, on presentation, would authorize the purchase of firearms or ammunition. This would be a logical course to pursue as well as an economical one, something which seems beyond the comprehension of the government.

Clause 99(2) brings into question the delicate matter of a gun owner's responsibility for safe handling and storage. What is meant by the words "careless storage", and how will the courts interpret this proposed section? It seems to me that gun owners may well be exposed to harsh penalties under this unless it is applied with great care.

Clause 100 prescribes the rules governing the manufacturing, repairing, reporting of losses, advertising, etc. of firearms and restricted weapons by dealers and gunsmiths. I submit that it is impossible to judge the relevance or value of the different features of this clause without having the regulations and the directions, to be issued by the commissioner, which apply thereto. The maximum penalties faced by violators is listed at five years, which seems too severe when considering the persons likely to be involved.

While listing my concerns over this bill I cannot help but wonder why some thought was not given to authorizing a court to impose an order of prohibition on any person charged with or convicted of any violent crime while such

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a person is out on bail or under suspended sentence. Such an amendment would have been directed at dangerous or habitual criminals who often return to violent crime immediately after they are placed on bail or suspended sentence.

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In conclusion I cannot help questioning the manner in which the government drafted, submitted, and now proposes to ram this legislation through parliament. I say this as a main feature of the bill would impose a licensing requirement on some two million Canadians without first providing for meaningful consultation with interested groups. By closing off debate on the bill the government has in effect silenced the voices of many democratically elected representatives of the people in such a way that many law-abiding Canadians will be given no real opportunity for understanding this legislation, or for responding. In the final analysis, few resent the necessity of obtaining a licence to own and carry firearms, just as most do not resent the necessity of buying a licence to drive a car. Basically this is another form of tax on your way of life, and another restriction of freedom.

We already have good gun laws on the books. The present laws, which I submit are adequate for Canada, should be implemented. Further, the bill misleads in that it claims to provide "better protection of Canadian society against perpetrators of violent... crime." It would be pleasant if this were true. Unfortunately the bank robber and killer will still have access to guns, legally or illegally, and the hoped for protection to be provided by this bill will be merely an illusion.

Mr. F. A. Philbrook (Halton): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-83 is the government's immediate response to the people's current concern over increased crime and violence. It is many things, but it is not everything, and it is important that we all know that. It is a sincere and courageous attempt by our federal government to tighten up the law and order system and to help Canadian society to cope better with crime and violence. It involves legislation on gun controls, bail, parole, sentencing, release from prison, wiretapping, the management of dangerous offenders and, most important of all, the improved prevention of crime. It is essential in its own right, aside from any other considerations, but it is not a sop to ease the way for abolition of capital punishment.

Bill C-83 does not include capital punishment, because that is the subject of another related bill, Bill C-84, to be debated in the near future. There will be a separate debate and vote on capital punishment, to satisfy Canadian concern that it has been handled fairly, clearly, thoroughly, and responsibly. It is an unusual and highly controversial aspect of our justice system, whichever way it is resolved. Both bills C-84 and C-83 must be resolved on their own merits. I look forward personally to participating in debate on these bills.

Bill C-83 also does not involve certain other areas of crime or current concern to Canadians. There are other federal programs to deal with organized crime, drug offences, and criminal use of firearms. Some crimes like traffic violations and gambling are beyond federal jurisdiction and are the direct responsibility of provincial and