

Private Members' Business

• (1705)

It simply wants to enable restricted weapons to be stored in a safer situation than the law allows currently and that was the will of the House historically and overwhelmingly so. This would just extend that principle.

I invite my colleagues to make comments and indicate whether there is a predisposition on the part of the House to do this unanimously and put it in place as quickly as possible to take that danger away. I thank the House for its attention.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to speak. I do not speak very often on private member's bills because so many go through the House that will never see the light of day.

This is a very good piece of legislation that my colleague from Calgary West has put forward because it is just straight common sense. I want to lay out the concerns that gun owners have with the present situation as it exists and the suggestion in Bill C-417 that my colleague from Calgary West has put forward.

In the last few days in my riding of Kenora—Rainy River I called the different police stations in such communities as Kenora, Dryden and Sioux Lookout to verify whether my colleague from Calgary West was correct. I asked them what kind of difficulties they were having with the permits that go to individuals who want to register their restricted firearms.

One of the problems they are having is that those firearms have to be stored somewhere until the owner receives a permit from the provincial registrar. That may not seem to be a major concern to those who are not too familiar with firearms, but when we have major gun clubs in communities like Kenora, Dryden and Sioux Lookout, literally hundreds and in some cases thousands of firearms can change hands on a yearly basis. In rural Canada these small detachments have only limited space for storage. We have created an administrative nightmare for no reason.

My colleague is asking us to just use good common sense in this particular private member's bill. We should allow those individuals who already own registered firearms to take their newly acquired firearms home and store them in their own approved storage facilities to

make sure a very valuable piece of equipment is looked after until the permit is received.

This private member's bill wants to allow individuals, who have already been searched by the police department and checked out thoroughly, who have proven to be conscientious gun owners in the past and know and have passed certain tests relating to the handling of firearms, to meet the requirements under this private member's bill.

One of the biggest concerns of gun owners and police officers who have to store these firearms is that they can be worth from \$500 to \$3,000. The police department has had to wait up to six weeks in the last year and in previous years anywhere from three months to six months for permits. That particular firearm was under severe threat of losing its value because of the fact that it could get rust on it and it was not maintained simply because the police department is not set up to do those kinds of things.

• (1710)

In conclusion I want to say that this will not only save money for gun owners and for police departments that will not have to administer a particular piece of the act that is not necessary, but it will also streamline the system for all those concerned. It retains the safety and integrity of the system that we now know and want to keep in place but at the same time it is a smart piece of legislation just because of its practicality.

I would like to concur with my colleague the member for Calgary West that we attempt to go through all stages tonight and pass it here in this place and send it to the Senate simply because to delay this and send it to committee would not serve any purpose because of the obvious result of this piece of legislation.

I want to thank my colleague for putting forward a very intelligent piece of legislation. I urge the members of the House here today to consider giving unanimous consent to pass it at all stages.

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak to Bill C-417 put forward by the hon. member for Calgary West.

This is simply a very practical proposition and response to representations that a number of us in the House have received. I am really delighted and I encourage members