

*Government Orders*

committee to take the advice of the International Shooting Union to determine whether there are other handguns that should be exempted so that legitimate sporting activities will not be threatened.

Second, I will ask the committee to examine the question of whether there are black powder shooting events that might be affected by this legislation. It is not our intention in any way to limit historical re-enactments with the use of reproductions. We do not believe we have done that but we will ask the committee to look specifically at that question and to let us know whether additional technical amendments are required to make the meaning clear.

Third, we will ask the committee to look at the question of relics and heirlooms, recognizing that there are families and individuals who want to pass on to the next generation firearms that they have acquired and that have a specific sentimental or historical value to the family. That should be respected. We will ask the committee to fashion a way to allow it to happen consistently with the imperatives of public safety.

These three items were of concern to my constituents of Central Nova. I am satisfied that the justice minister will see that they are properly addressed.

The Minister of Justice stressed that Canadians will have the opportunity to make their views known when the legislation is reviewed by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. I trust that the concerns of my constituents will be addressed. I urge all my constituents to partake in the legislative process by making their views known to the House of Commons committee.

• (1300)

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ):** Madam Speaker, on February 14, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada tabled in this House his firearms bill to strengthen control over such weapons. It was high time. I support this bill, although my feeling is that it does not go far enough. I consider it is about time a country such as ours enacts legislation to protect all citizens.

We all know that gun-related crime has increased dramatically. We all remember the tragedy that occurred in the Quebec National Assembly, ten years or so ago, and the dreadful massacre at l'École Polytechnique, just a few years ago. Every day that goes by we hear about firearms being used to assault, threaten, intimidate and kill. Possessing a firearm gives criminals a great illusion of power, authority and strength.

In November, the president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police commented that the issue of legal possession of firearms was not a game. The public, including hunters, competitive shooters, collectors and shooters, all people for whom I have great respect and law-abiding citizens, should consider these controls as reaffirming their rights and responsibilities. It

is up to them to act on reaffirming their rights and responsibilities.

There is no doubt that a more structured control system, providing among other things for the registration of all firearms, will help make this country a safer and more peaceful place to be for all of us. Indeed, weapons are dangerous and there is a need to legislate in this respect. The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada is on the right track with Bill C-68. However, I firmly believe, as stated previously, that this bill does not go far enough and that the minister should use coroner Anne-Marie David's report, released on January 26, as a model.

As Ms. David suggested, has the time not come to revise the wording of regulations concerning the safe storage, display and transportation of firearms so as to make it more easily accessible to all? While ignorance of the law is no excuse, is it not the justice minister's role to make it easier to understand? Time has come to review regulations and require businesses to lock up, and even render inoperative, any firearm for sale.

Also, restricted firearms should only be stored in a vault. These regulations should not authorize weapons without a safety locking mechanism to be delivered to anyone. I would even add that the Minister of Justice should amend the Criminal Code to provide that firearms will systematically be confiscated if regulations are not complied with.

• (1305)

Instead of spending millions of dollars on useless bodies such as the one on Canadian unity, should the government not invest these moneys in education and information programs for the public at large and for specific groups such as hunters, gun collectors, members of shooting clubs and others?

Several provisions in this bill need to be clarified. By spreading over an eight-year period the registration process for gun owners and firearms, did the Minister of Justice simply give in to the gun lobby, or did he want to please some members of his caucus? I am sceptical as to the deterring effect of such a reform.

The gun lobby encourages people to buy arms to protect themselves. Yet, it is proven that people are safer when they are not armed. A firearm kept in a house is 43 times more likely to kill a member of that household than an intruder. Why wait eight years, considering that a homicide is three times more likely to be committed in a home where a firearm is kept, while a suicide is five times more likely to occur?

Canadians, health specialists and particularly crime prevention experts all ask, and rightly so, for greater control over firearms. In Canada, 42 per cent of women killed by their spouse are shot, four times out of five with a gun or a rifle. Moreover, 78 per cent of these firearms are legally owned. Again, I ask the