

tee, that such an authority be put in the Criminal Code on a general basis.

As I have indicated previously, such amnesties can be put in place any time by provincial or local authorities. They very much depend upon the ability of those authorities to deal with the logistics of such an amnesty; in other words, to have the person power available to administer the program and have the storage facilities to store safely what may be an unanticipated quantity, or find it difficult to determine in advance firearms that may be turned in by the public.

I would like, in terms of the amnesty that I promote, one in conjunction with the implementation of our legislation because I think it is an opportunity to combine such a program with a broad public education campaign to make Canadians aware of the new regime, their responsibilities under it and the extent to which it addresses their concerns. If it is the view of the committee that such a broad power ought to be incorporated into the Criminal Code, I would be very interested to get their recommendations.

There is a growing concern over the role of firearms in all parts of Canadian society, particularly in the wake of the Montreal tragedy and other incidents in recent months.

[*Translation*]

Our present system has greatly reduced the threat of firearms in Canada, but the situation in the last decade has changed and this government has an obligation to respond. We have a duty to restrict opportunities for the careless and criminal misuse of guns as far as it is possible for us to do so.

• (1230 )

[*English*]

It is for all of these reasons that I ask the House to support this motion in order to put in place a process to respond to those public concerns in the most timely and effective way and ultimately to support these legislative proposals.

### *Government Orders*

I think I have stated very clearly the reasons why the particular breadth of the firearms package that I have put forward. Those provisions which are outside the strict terms of Bill C-80 and the kinds of concerns that Canadians have raised on this issue make this a subject matter uniquely suited to the kind of treatment that is envisaged in this order.

I hope that we will be able to move ahead on second reading of this bill. As I have said, my colleagues on this side of the House are very keen to make it a full second reading debate, not a truncated one.

I also recognize the very real possibility that the bill would not be concluded with even if we proceeded with second reading debate today by the time the House rises. I am very anxious that this subject be given full public consultation, not simply as a way of getting input on the measures that I proposed, but as an opportunity to inform Canadians about what we are proposing and perhaps to counter some of the misperceptions that Canadians have about the level of gun control in Canada.

Research on public opinion shows that the view of Canadians on the level of violent crime in Canada, for example, is that it is at a much higher level than it in fact is. The fact that many Canadians watch a great deal of American television leads them very frequently to be of the view that the kind of gun control legislation—or the absence of gun control legislation—that prevails in the United States prevails here.

This is really an issue which ought to be quite non-partisan. In fact, the Liberal government in 1978 showed a great deal of courage in tackling this very difficult issue. It was built on a legislative tradition that began, I think, in 1892. I believe handguns were restricted in the 1930s and 1978 was a major change. The fact that the training provisions were not proclaimed does not mean that they were not good provisions. It is very comforting to have them already in the code and now be able to consider whether this is the time and whether we have the opportunity to implement them, notwithstanding the problems of jurisdictional differences and making sure that people in remote areas have the same access to meet the criteria, et cetera.

It is a very important opportunity to inform Canadians of where we are now and of the fact that we do have in Canada a very good system of gun control legislation, and that what we are proposing is a fine-tuning, an