

rate, called "Saturday Night Specials". As far as the permit is concerned in Canada, the registration of all weapons seems neither possible nor really effective.

● (2100)

This legislation does not provide for the registration of long-barrelled guns but for the issuance of licences. This government believes it is more important to ensure that those who possess firearms or ammunition or those who want to acquire them are fit to do so. Therefore, anyone who owns a firearm or ammunition will require a license. Once more, it is not necessary to register them. This license will be valid for five years and will be issued only if the licensing officer is satisfied that the applicant's background warrants such issuance.

Further, the applicant must submit the statements of two guarantors who have known him for at least two years and who certify that to the best of their knowledge, the applicant is not unfit to get such a license. The fees collected from licensees will cover the cost of this system. People who are under 18 years of age who wish to use a firearm must apply for a special permit that will be issued subject to very strict conditions. This permit will be issued only for target practice, in hunting or in target practice training. Applications for a permit made by people who are under 18 must be signed by two guarantors, one being a parent or a close relative of the applicant. Special provision is made in the legislation to enable people under 18 to possess firearms for the purpose of hunting game for food or family support if, in given areas, hunting and trapping are part of the way of life. In such cases, the issuance of the permit will be free of charge in order not to increase the financial burden on these people. A permit is required for all firearms and ammunition dealers, wholesalers and retailers, importers and manufacturers. All these people must maintain records of all their transactions concerning arms and ammunition. These records will be regularly checked, and the legislation will also provide for other means to improve present import controls.

Also as regard firearms, in particular the legal responsibility, we must not simply scrutinize the case of those who possess fire arms and ammunition. We must also ensure that permit-holders are not minusing firearms. Careless handling and storage can lead to a maximum five-year jail term. As far as administration is concerned, it should be noted that control measures described in the bill require a flexible administration system. A large number of local registrars and licensing officers will be located throughout Canada, so that every Canadian may apply easily. In most cases, there is ample provision for appeals where a citizen feels his permit has been unfairly denied or cancelled.

When the government looked for ways of better protecting the public against violent crimes, they realized at once action was needed in respect of firearms. Availability is a natural incentive to crime. Moreover, firearms play an increasing role in various kinds of murders committed in Canada. Strict measures were needed to deter criminals from using guns. Prompt action was needed to ensure responsible possession and use of firearms.

There were some suggestions that carrying firearms was a right and attacks made on the government for attempting to regulate another area of the average Canadian's life. But

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these censors must recognize that firearms are too often an instrument of crime and a cause for accident. Failure to regulate their use would leave free hand to criminals and expose the public to the worst tragedies. Opponents of the program have nothing better to propose to prevent firearms abuse.

For that reason, the government had to propose the various measures contained in Bill C-83. It should be stressed that the right to own a firearm is not abolished. Those practising hunting or target shooting, young people desiring to join the militia or a gun club, all have the right to own a fire arm. Simply, they must obtain a permit. This will prevent firearms from falling into the hands of some potentially dangerous persons. The disadvantages of control are very little compared with the lives thus saved.

As for the dangerous delinquents, we know that for some ten years there has been a quite substantial increase in violent crimes in Canada. The new legislation is aimed at restraining the progress of criminality including rape and other sexual offences. It considers the creation of a group of dangerous delinquents liable to indefinite sentences, that is life sentences which could be periodically reviewed by the National Parole Board.

The bill wishes to abolish the present provisions of the Criminal Code concerning recidivism and dangerous sexual offences. It provides new provisions empowering the courts to impose an indefinite sentence in the case of all dangerous delinquents including sexual offenders. The present provisions of the code do not extend to all groups of dangerous sexual offences.

Once the offender is convicted, the court is asked to impose an indefinite sentence which will require the approval of the provincial Attorney General to be implemented. The indefinite sentence therefore replaces all other sentences provided by the law for crimes committed by dangerous offenders. The court can impose such a sentence if the offender has been convicted of an offence for which he can be sentenced to imprisonment for 10 years or more, and which include violence or an attempt at violence or a behaviour dangerous or potentially dangerous for the life of another person or a likelihood of inflicting severe psychological damage to another person.

Before a request for an indefinite sentence can be made however, the approval of the provincial Attorney General must be obtained. When making such a request, the court must be convinced that the offender constitutes a threat to the life, security or welfare of the public according to evidence or a repetitive behaviour pattern showing that the offender cannot control his actions and could cause injuries in the future, or a pattern of persistent aggressive behaviour, showing a substantial degree of indifference on the part of the offender as to the consequences of his behaviour, or a pattern of excessively brutal behaviour.

An indefinite sentence can be imposed if the offender has been convicted of rape, attempted rape, sexual intercourse or attempted sexual intercourse with a female under 16, indecent assault on female or male, or gross indecency, or if the offender has shown that he cannot repress his sexual impulses and will probably cause injury, pain or other evil to other persons through failure in the future to control his sexual impulses.