

There are many other main arguments against the bill, and some of them can be enumerated as follows:

First, the registration system envisaged is expensive. Some estimates for implementation range up to \$500 million.

Second, the system will divert scarce manpower and money away from crime prevention and crime solving. Policemen will be behind desks, not on the streets.

Third, the system will be run by the cash-strapped provinces which will be forced to cut other programs in order to install a registration system.

Fourth, the system is virtually unenforceable. It would require a nationwide house-to-house search to see if it was being obeyed.

Fifth, the registration system per se will do nothing to keep guns out of the hands of criminals or to reduce domestic violence.

Sixth, gun registration is not like vehicle registration, because if a gun is not registered, criminal penalties result.

Seventh, the parts of the registration system affecting Canada's aboriginal people may violate their constitutionally guaranteed treaty rights to hunt for food. It has been argued that any interference with this right makes certain aspects of the bill unconstitutional, if not the whole bill.

Eighth, the bill purports to regulate shooting clubs, firearms ranges, and gun shows. These are clearly matters which should fall within provincial jurisdiction and therefore beyond the jurisdiction of the federal parliament.

Ninth, section 103 of the Criminal Code proposed by Bill C-68 would permit the federal government to initiate and conduct prosecutions for a Criminal Code offence. Traditionally, the federal government's power to prosecute offences has been placed in statutes separate from the Criminal Code. In this instance, since we are dealing with import/export offences, such offences should be part of the Customs and Excise Act, otherwise there could be a federal invasion of the provinces' administration of justice powers.

These are the reasons I oppose this bill and support the amendments introduced by the Honourable Senator Ghitter.

I endorse the motion passed by the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs requesting the Minister of Justice to consult with the aboriginal communities of Canada. Such consultation should focus on whether the constitutional requirements, as set out in various agreements with the Yukon First Nations and the Cree people, are affected by the provisions of the bill.

I support the amendment that would allow provinces and territories, which are responsible for the administration of this

bill, to delay implementation. This will allow them time to examine the costs, workability, and efficiency of the legislation.

Regulations made pursuant to this act should follow the same procedure as most other regulations. They should be laid before each house of Parliament for at least 30 sitting days before the implementation date. This will allow public inquiries to be held when appropriate.

I endorse the amendment which would decriminalize the offence of failure to register a firearm. It is unreasonable to threaten law-abiding citizens with criminal sanctions over the mere failure to register a firearm.

Along the same lines, the amendments proposed to clause 92(3) should be supported. This provision would punish a person who knowingly possesses an unlicensed, prohibited, or restricted weapon for a minimum sentence of one year on the second offence, and two years less a day for a third offence. These sentences take away from the discretion which a court should have to impose an appropriate sentence.

Finally, the Canadian Museum Association expressed strong concerns about the costs that the statute would impose on museums. It is estimated that over \$4 million will be required from museums to meet the registration aspects of this bill. I support the amendment to exempt museums from licensing changes under the bill.

Honourable senators, I support the amendments proposed, and I urge all honourable senators to support them, as they will make Bill C-68 a more acceptable piece of legislation.

**Hon. Eymard G. Corbin:** If the honourable senator would allow me, I should like to put a question to him.

The honourable senator raised the matter of a letter he received from, I would not say a constituent, but somebody from his own bailiwick.

In my view, the letter appears to contain some excessive and unfounded language. Has the honourable senator contacted this person to lay out the facts as the bill recounts them? Does he intend to do so? Is he accepting at face value everything in that letter?

**Senator Oliver:** I thank the honourable senator for his question. I received this letter by fax this morning. It is from the Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Wildlife Federation, a well-known federation in the province of Nova Scotia. It was sent by Mr. Tony Rodgers, who is known to me. He has written to me on several other occasions about this particular piece of legislation, and I have responded. He must have read in the newspapers that this bill would be voted on some time soon, and he wanted to make sure that I knew his position.

I have not responded to this particular fax that I received this morning.