

expected to believe if we accept the minister's rationale that the way to deal with gun-related crimes is to licence all law-abiding Canadian gun owners. In the game of credibility, the minister is batting zero.

It has been pointed out over the years and in the last few days in this House that guns do not go out and commit murders. People commit murders. Short of setting up a communist state in Canada, there is no way we can legislate against free movement and free activity. As long as we preserve the degree of liberty and freedom we enjoy in Canada, people will be free to move about and commit acts both legal and illegal, sad to say. In communist countries, governments legislate what people may own, what they can do and where they can go; yet communist states are not free of crime. Do we have to go so far abroad to find support for the thesis that crime cannot be eliminated simply by restricting the rights of the innocent? I should think anyone of average intelligence would work that out in his or her own mind without the need to do any more than just think.

In this legislation on gun control, the Minister of Justice, in effect, tells us he has six criminals, figuratively speaking, and six law-abiding citizens, so naturally he has a round dozen of something or other. The fact is that he does not have a dozen of anything, Mr. Speaker. He has six people of a type that we should be seeking in this legislation to control, and six people of a type who should be left strictly alone. Six apples and six oranges do not make a dozen of either apples or oranges, and I hope that we will not delay too long in separating this bill into its pertinent parts.

I wonder just how much more control over personal rights and freedoms the Canadian people will accept before they rebel. It might be that the gun controls proposed in this bill will push the average Canadian over the line. No doubt some people of uneven temper and certain mental make-up will be pushed over the line as a result of the legislation. I happen to believe that even if we were to spend the millions of dollars it would cost to register all gun owners in Canada, we would not be certain of whether we had in fact registered all gun owners, three-quarters of them or even just half of them.

Experience that other countries have had with gun registration—and that goes for both pistols and long-guns—is that there are eventually more unregistered guns in a given city or country after a time than there are registered guns. In North America, particularly, people have traditionally felt that they had a right to own shotguns and rifles. On this half-continent our whole history and economy is founded on the historic traditional and sensible use of firearms. That is why, today, in millions of Canadian homes there are firearms belonging to the family. They are not used very often, but families have a historic right to them. In the United States they have the right to own long-guns enshrined in their constitution. It is difficult, if not impossible, to convince people in Canada that they should accept gun controls because the federal government has this hang-up about limiting and restricting civil rights.

Mr. Speaker, if I thought for a minute that we could fight crime in Canada by forcing law-abiding people to line up and register as gun owners, dog owners, budgie owners, or any other hobbyists, then I would have to give it a try. I

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am just as interested as anyone else in controlling violent crime in Canada, and if I match my record of public statements against those of the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand), then I have to say that I am more interested in combating crime than they are.

However, unlike those ministers, I do not propose to combat crime by chipping away at the rights and privileges of the victims of crime and the potential victims of crime while ignoring those at whom this kind of legislation should be directed. It would help a lot in our anti-crime campaign—if it can be called by that name—if we could get just a little help from the ministers across the floor. It would help a great deal if the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General would stop wringing their hands and sobbing over the fate of some poor fellow who happens to be found guilty of a vicious and senseless murder.

I have repeated over and over again, Mr. Speaker, that my sympathies are with the law-abiding citizen and with the victims of crime. When we have a federal minister who opens a speech on a bill designed to control crime with the statement that the bill seeks to protect the rights and dignity of those charged with offences, then I feel inclined to reserve my sympathies for the victims. The rights and dignity of those charged with offences are already protected by legislation existing since the time of confederation. We certainly want to defend those rights, but that is not our paramount concern at this time. The minister's statement at least ran true to form, because we find the minister saying later in his speech that these gun control proposals will assist the government's efforts to control gun-related crimes.

The member for Edmonton East related a few instances of how the rights and privileges of Canadians are steadily being eroded by this government's succession of controls—controls over the economy, controls over the incomes of working people by way of oppressive taxation, the abolition of the right of inheritance, and control of communications. What about the necessity and the right of people in some occupations and exposures to carry a gun, usually a hand-gun? This right, history has shown, has always existed, and it is our duty to see that it is maintained. A licence for use by this section of the law-abiding public should always be available. I will list two or three categories, and I am sure members have others in mind. Some of these categories are: women on late night duty should be able to carry a gun if they wish; nurses and others having to traverse areas not having full-time police surveillance during early morning hours; and messengers and people who carry considerable sums of money in unprotected regions and areas. A licence to carry a gun for these reasons is often the best form of crime prevention.

I will give an example in my own family. It took place long before I was born, but I will always remember the story as told to me years ago by an uncle, R. W. Kimmerly of Napanee who passed to his reward in 1951 at the age of 95. He was engaged as a young man in about 1880 to peddle goods and merchandise. He used a covered wagon and travelled northward out of Deseronto, Ontario, for the Rathbun Company, a large lumber and timber complex of that era. He was badly scared and roughed up one night in a hotel yard in one of the villages along the way, but with help he managed to defend his wagon against the hood-