

*Government Orders*

I do not think this system of justice is sustainable. I believe that it will lead to chaos. Clearly our democracy must be one of inclusion rather than exclusion. Our society is becoming more complex and technical.

I would like to end my comments by quoting from one of our own political philosophers, Mr. George Grant. In his book *Twilight of Justice* he observed that one of the changes to a more technical society in Canada, that the need for control of humans in a technological society increases with the complexity of society. Technique causes the state to become totalitarian, to absorb the citizen's life completely.

• (1740)

Finally, the definition of liberal, which I am, is favouring individual liberty. I hope the committee will take the time to discuss some of these matters.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have owned firearms off and on for more than half a century. I have been a reasonably good citizen but now in the eyes of the Minister of Justice and certainly in the eyes of the popular press, I have become a threat to society, a menace to peace, order and good government.

I am going to be subjected, if these laws that are now before us in Bill C-68 are all lumped together as one—the administrative bureaucracy and the criminal sanctions—of running the risk of being a common criminal. That, to my way of thinking, is neither just nor sane.

If I or anyone else chooses to inconvenience the bureaucracy by failing to comply with the purely administrative requirement, the result will be a criminal record and the penalty could far exceed that which some drunken hoodlums recently received for murdering a harmless old man in the province of Saskatchewan. This is absurd.

The justice minister says that he has actually separated the administrative from the criminal because we have these two sections in the one bill. That is smoke and mirrors if we are still talking about draconian criminal penalties for failure to observe an administrative law. That, in my humble opinion, does not give separation.

I own a few firearms even today but I hardly ever hunt. I do not belong to any shooting club. I do not belong to the NFA. If I lost my guns tomorrow it would not make a big difference to my lifestyle. However, I would be losing something a lot more important than hardware. I would be losing a big piece of my civil liberty.

The justice minister says that the right to own a particular type of property, firearms, is really just a privilege. I submit that Canada's top lawyer has an unbelievably feeble grasp of history and of the common law. Omission from the British North America Act or the charter of rights and freedoms does not mean

that a right does not exist. Our legal system is based on British common law and on the sanctity of customary rights.

When Sir William Blackstone codified the common law he noted that every individual has certain absolute rights, including the right to personal security, personal liberty and the right to own and use property. Does that sound familiar? American revolutionaries did not invent those concepts. They merely enshrined in their constitution the rights which as Englishmen they already had.

Blackstone went on to list five auxiliary rights without which the absolute rights could not be protected and maintained. One of them was the right to own personal arms. When Americans passed their famous second amendment to the constitution, their right to bear arms, it was only a modest extension of a right which they had before the revolution.

In Great Britain there has been a steady chipping away at this right, starting in 1870 and accelerating after the first world war. It was supposedly because of the threat from Bolshevik or anarchist terrorists. However, just as in Canada today, public hysteria was fanned by the government and, just as in Canada, laws have become progressively more intrusive, complex and downright repressive. Today they have almost achieved the justice minister's ideal where only police, soldiers and the trusted elite of society have legal firearms. However, there is no shortage of firepower in the U.K.

• (1745)

A few months ago I talked with a Scottish gun dealer and he told me that Great Britain is awash with guns. You can buy one faster and more easily in a pub than from him, and cheaper because there is no tax.

What is accomplished as gun laws are made tougher and tougher? What affect does the hassle and the expensive bureaucracy have on crime? Very little.

I have reviewed firearms legislation and crime statistics from various states south of the border and from several other countries. Now I am going to bore the House with some of the dull facts that the justice department's social engineers cheerfully ignore.

Consider the prairie provinces. Since gun controls began in 1978, the annual homicide rate has averaged about 3.2 per 100,000 people, of which about one-third are committed with guns.

In the four border states of Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana and Idaho the rate was 2.7 per 100,000. That is 16 per cent less. Those are all wide open. The justice minister would probably say those are lawless states where you can own and carry almost anything short of a bazooka.

The District of Columbia, with the most stringent controls of any North American jurisdiction except Mexico has the unbelievably high murder rate of 80 per 100,000 per year, the highest