

The Minister of Justice, I believe it was, provided the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs last year with a document which outlined in detail the provincial training courses and tests for those seeking a licence to carry a rifle or a shotgun. A review of this document clearly shows that the provinces are well equipped to handle the situation and that they do not need the intervention of the federal government. It is certain that the taxpayer does not need it.

The province of British Columbia requires a minimum of 20 hours of study before an application for a licence is made, and the issue of a licence is still subject to an individual who has followed that course of study passing a test on the subject material. What is the subject material? It includes outdoor ethics, in other words, how to treat your neighbour, the farmer or the rancher; the proper way of handling a gun when out with someone else; gun-handling and firearms safety; the regulations of the province of British Columbia; animal identification; bird identification; survival, and first aid. That is 20 hours of good, common sense education. I know that some provinces require certain periods to be spent on the gun range. Mr. Speaker, in every province in Canada, and in the Yukon—with the sole exception of the Northwest Territories—provision has already been made for proper training before licensing, in one form or another. I suggest the government could do a great deal to ensure uniformity by urging that certain criteria be established in every province. Beyond that, the need for federal intervention is limited.

I am disturbed that as a result of this bill the small businessman, the shopkeeper who sells guns and/or ammunition, will be subject to long and detailed documentation with regard to what he has in the store, what he sells, what he purchases, and the measures he takes to secure his stock. It amounts to one more piece of bureaucratic "bum-f", one more time-consuming operation inflicted by law upon the small businessman. No one has thought of saying, "Now look, we, the federal government, recognize that it is going to take a certain number of hours to fulfil the requirements we have laid down in the bill and we are prepared to provide some type of remuneration because we feel that this is important." After all, in British Columbia, at least, they refund 3 per cent of the sales tax, in many instances, to the shopkeeper who collects it. But not a dime is offered in this case. It is just another piece of paper to be filled out.

The other day we heard the Minister of State for Small Business (Mr. Marchand) telling the House how concerned he is about the bureaucratic red tape which must be cut in order that small business, the employer of more than 50 per cents of Canada's work force, may survive. Well, perhaps he succeeds in removing one piece of red tape, but when he turns around he finds another in its place. Where does it all end? Surely the Minister of State (Small Business) should have been consulted before the Solicitor General or the Minister of Justice—he is the sponsor of this bill—decided to propose that particular provision, which I think is Section 104 (11). I hope the Minister of Justice will reconsider the terms of reference of the

Criminal Code

bill. I see he is scratching his head so I think my message has got through.

● (2030)

There are a multitude of concerns which I have about this bill, and one of them refers to murder statistics. I heard a great variety of figures bandied about this afternoon indicating that the crime of murder involving the use of guns was escalating. The hon. member for Broadview compared the number of cases in Canada with the number of cases in the United States. This is an oranges and apples argument because he did not give the per capita ratio. I have always been under the impression, and I judge from your smile, Mr. Speaker, that you have also, that the United States has a somewhat larger population than Canada. Therefore I would seriously question statistics offered by the hon. member for Broadview having to do with the number of crimes of violence resulting in death in which the use of a gun is employed.

The hon. member also says that a Gallup poll had revealed that more than 85 per cent of Canadians were in favour of gun control. I would ask, where was this Gallup poll conducted? Was it conducted in the city of Montreal, or in the city of Toronto, or in Vancouver? What was the question asked? How was it posed? Was it a motherhood kind of question? Was it a question of: when did you stop beating your wife? How many times was the same question posed to the rural community? Where is the rural balance in this Gallup poll? I am not convinced that that Gallup poll is in any way, shape or form, accurate.

I recognize that in major urban centres crime does present a serious problem, one which the government has to date categorically failed to address itself to because of its soft treatment of violent criminals. Wall to wall carpeting and television will be next, Mr. Speaker. I can understand the concern of people in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. I can understand that they may feel the next step is the ghetto situation in New York, where apartment dwellers require security guards 24 hours a day and have to show identification to get into their own apartment building. It is to be hoped we will never reach that stage. These people fear crimes of violence committed by criminals who, through one means or another, have obtained registered or unregistered handguns.

No one can convince me, nor can statistics demonstrate, that crimes of violence in major urban centres in Canada or in the United States involve the use of shotguns or rifles. These crimes, simply because of the dimension of the weapon, involve the use of either licensed or unregistered hand guns, so do not give us this shallow argument that these crimes involve the use of rifles and shotguns.

I am aware that statistically, as the Solicitor General pointed out earlier today, some crimes of violence are committed by people against someone they know—for example, the family quarrel. But do you honestly believe, Mr. Speaker, that if an individual applies for a licence to buy a rifle or shotgun this week, this is going to have any bearing on a murder which may be two or three years down the line? I would challenge the