

*Measures Against Crime***AFTER RECESS**

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT (NO. 1), 1976****MEASURES FOR BETTER PROTECTION OF CANADIAN SOCIETY AGAINST CRIME**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Basford that Bill C-83, for the better protection of Canadian society against perpetrators of violence and other crime, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

**Mr. Peter P. Masniuk (Portage):** Mr. Speaker, when I called it five o'clock I was talking about the provisions governing certain restricted weapons, including hand-guns, which were written into the Criminal Code over 40 years ago.

I should like to leave my notes for a moment, however, and respond to some of the comments made by the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) this afternoon. I was interested in what he said about gun collectors who have invested a considerable amount of money in what were—and will be until this bill goes through the House—restricted weapons. These collectors apparently invested in machine-guns of one sort or another. They went through the process of registering a weapon, removing the firing pin, and placing it in another part of the place where they kept their gun collection. They are now very concerned that passage of this bill would prohibit ownership of these guns.

I am very concerned, Mr. Speaker, about what will happen if the bill goes through in its present form. These machine-guns are only part of a collection. If the owners comply with every phase of the law and then a gun becomes a prohibited weapon which has to be turned over to the RCMP or some other agent of the government which will confiscate them, will the owners be compensated? There are a lot of other things in the bill that I disapprove of, Mr. Speaker, and as I proceed I will show why I cannot vote for the bill in its present form.

To return to my notes, I should like to say that a former commissioner of the RCMP, Mr. L. H. Nicholson, has stated that the registration program failed miserably. This short assessment of the former commissioner merely stated an old truth about gun controls, and that is that one simply cannot control crime or criminals by controlling guns.

● (2010)

What has been the result of almost 40 years of these tough hand-gun controls in Canada? An examination of the statistics with regard to hand-guns used in shootings does not provide much of a recommendation for controls. More than ever the statistics only tend to confirm former Commissioner Nicholson's assessment.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

In 1973, according to the statistics, there were 214 shootings in Canada. Of these the second largest number, next to the rifle, were committed with the restricted hand-gun, 56. There were 114 rifle shootings that year. A year later, in 1974, there were 272 shootings in Canada, a 27 per cent increase in one year. During 1974, however, although the restricted hand-gun was still second to the unrestricted rifle in terms of its popularity for shooting people, the number of shootings committed with hand-guns had risen to 71. The number of shootings with the far more easily obtainable and completely unrestricted rifle only increased by eight in the same one year period.

I know that on the one hand statistics do not necessarily prove anything and, on the other hand, they can be used to prove anything one wants them to prove, but the very least that statistics like these should tell us is that so-called gun controls have no control at all over the use of guns to commit crimes.

An examination of the situation in other countries suggests that their experiences with gun controls are similar to Canada's with hand-gun controls. Anti-gun laws and regulations are actually quite prevalent in most countries of the world. However, crime statistics for practically all of them seem to indicate that gun controls have relatively little, if any, effect on reducing or eliminating crime.

The toughest gun control in the United States is New York State's Sullivan law. In the city of New York, out of a total population of some seven million plus, less than 25,000 qualify legally to possess a firearm of any kind. This law has been in effect for over 60 years. Yet in the 12 year period from 1960 to 1972 the homicide rate in the city of New York increased from 3.7 per 100,000 people in 1960 to 19.1 per 100,000 in 1972. In the one year period from 1971 to 1972 there was an 11 per cent increase in armed robbery, and a 37 per cent increase in aggravated assault.

A mid 1960's Interpol sampling of the murder rate in 30 countries ranged from a high of 177 murders per 100,000 population in the Arab country of Yemen to a low of 0.13 per 100,000 population in Norway. All the countries in the sample had gun control laws of one kind or another, either gun registrations, purchase permits, licences to carry, or various combinations of these. Obviously, however, they have no effect whatsoever on the murder rate.

It is interesting to note that this 30 country sample includes some countries whose gun control laws are not for the purpose of disarming the nation's citizens but, rather, are just for the opposite reason, for ensuring that the nation's citizens are adequately armed. Switzerland is the most well known country in this regard. In Switzerland there are no restrictive laws on the general use of firearms, but every able bodied adult male is required by law to possess and to know how to use a military rifle. Adult males must undergo throughout the year periodic short drills in the use of their military weapons. It is quite