

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise on third reading of Bill C-68 on the final day of debate on this fine bill.

I am very proud to rise as a member of this caucus because I am proud not just of our position on this bill but also of the strength of our caucus in standing up to criticism which, although many times unfair and certainly very emotional, has been strong and relentless. I am also proud of the Prime Minister and particularly of the justice minister who has seen this legislation through from beginning to end.

I am proud also because I know I am representing the views of my constituents in Windsor—St. Clair. We have heard a lot of the importance of representing the views of our constituents today. We heard a lot from the third party about that. There are some very specific reasons the people of Windsor—St. Clair want me to vote for the bill.

In Windsor we enjoy a great deal of American tourism. We are less than a mile from the United States. When thinking where to go for lunch one can actually factor in restaurants in Detroit. One can go there and get back on one's lunch hour. That is how close it is. We have clean, safe streets. We have tremendous cross-border shopping in reverse and we have a casino which attracts 17,000 visitors a day, 90 per cent of whom are American.

People who are active in the tourist industry in Windsor, hoteliers, people at the casino and others, tell us one of the great reasons for the attraction of our community is that it is in Canada and people feel safe there. They tell us clearly and unequivocally that when they canvas their customers, when they talk to the patrons at the Windsor casino, gun control is a factor.

This bill in a very specific economic sense is good for my riding. The people of my riding appreciate it, understand it and want it. That is not my only reason for supporting it and certainly is not the only reason my constituents have for supporting it.

It is my view and the view of the majority of my constituents that the bill is not just about crime control. The people of Windsor—St. Clair and I as their representative suggest the bill is about the kind of Canada we want for the future, in our retirement for our children, for our grandchildren. It is about the values we share as a country.

There is no constitutional right to bear arms in Canada. There is no right to pack a pistol on one's hip or to hide one in one's car; nor should there ever be. On the other hand as a society we value hunting, sport shooting and aboriginal rights and we struggle to find the balance between those seemingly competing interests. In Windsor we know this very well. We also know what happens when firearms as a commodity go out of control.

• (1530)

As I said, we live less than a mile from a country with a very different view of this commodity, a country where firearms are indeed out of control. We watch the Detroit news in Windsor, and every night purposeful criminal shootings and accidental shootings are displayed on the air as though they were car accidents or as though they were just another fact of life. In those American cities they are.

I worked in Windsor in the criminal courts as both a defence lawyer and a prosecuting lawyer. Every Monday morning in bail court—court room number three, for those of you who are listening in Windsor—there would be a parade of American visitors to Canada who came into the country, passed that great big sign that says that firearms are prohibited in Canada, came across the border and had their firearms seized. Why? They would tell us they had forgotten they were in the car. They would be under the front seat, loaded, or in the glove box loaded or in the trunk loose and loaded, sometimes carelessly stored, sometimes kept loaded and right on hand.

Very often these same people would be offended by our laws and highly indignant, all of them feeling that they have a God-given right to carry a gun, and in spite of the warning at the border they were going to continue to carry it. Why do they feel that way? They feel that way because their culture is different from ours, but also because many of them feel a need to carry that gun. They feel they need protection. This is not the society or the culture the vast majority of Canadians want to live in.

I enjoy Americans very much. I like going to the United States. There is much to admire about their culture, their industry, their enthusiasm, their protection of individual rights. There is much to recommend in their democratic system. Yet last February the President of the United States came to this House and spoke to a joint sitting of the House and the Senate, and what did he talk about? He talked about our efforts to control firearms in our society. What did he talk about when he was introduced to our justice minister that evening? Both he and Mrs. Clinton wished him well in his struggle to control this commodity.

My friends opposite like to talk about democracy and about the need for us to represent our constituents. They like to talk about the importance of representing the folks back home in this House. I believe that is what I am doing. I believe that the constituents of Windsor—St. Clair support me, support this government, support the Prime Minister and the justice minister in this effort to control this commodity. I believe as well that the vast majority of the constituents of the members of the third party feel the same way.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the speech the member made. I know she has spent some time on this.