

competitors and collectors will be able to trade, buy or sell with reasonable guidelines in place.

In the end the thrust of this bill is to achieve a safer Canadian society. I hope that my hon. colleagues will bear with me while I explain the background from which I speak today.

My twin brother and I, who I am sure my colleague across the way will remember, grew up on a farm in central Manitoba. For whatever the reasons my parents saw no need to own firearms.

However rummaging in the attic one day—of course it is my twin brother who did all these nasty things—we located two old firearms. One was a shotgun with absolutely no trigger action left and the other one was an old Snider rifle which was used in one of the wars, the first world war or earlier.

We played with those for a number of years. I do not know what has become of them but obviously they were relics. If we had the same rules then that we are going to have, we would be in some legal difficulty.

I do recall however that my friends purchased .22 calibre firearms for their use when they “came of age”. I would go hunting with them. The admonition from my parents at that time was to be careful.

The point that I make is that for most cases, that was enough. Most of us were. In the 1940s and 1950s, one could acquire firearms by mail order, could use them without training, could will them without any inhibiting regulation.

Those of us who survived without regulatory interference feel that we have somehow lost some freedoms and privileges in the intervening years, as we have moved into an era where because of societal difficulties we have developed a system of regulation for the training, acquisition, sale and storage of firearms.

In conclusion, I would have to say that my age group can look back to a very idyllic time where responsibility was a given, care and caution was expected. It is these memories that tend to anger the firearm owners of today.

• (1620)

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer the hon. member to a number of reasons for which there is such growing opposition across the country to more regulations for law-abiding gun owners.

One reason is that it is costly. The minister indicated that it would cost \$85 million to implement this legislation. Other estimates reach into the hundreds of millions of dollars. People on this side of the House, certainly at this time of budgetary constraint, would question why we are spending this money on the registration of firearms. The money would be better spent on health care or other social programs.

Government Orders

The second reason is that it is a non-secure system. If a hacker can break into the Pentagon's computer list, it will certainly make a shopping list for criminals once the information is out.

The third reason—and members opposite will say that only those who are paranoid will say this—is that this is another step toward confiscation. The minister has repeatedly said that he believes only law enforcement officers and armed forces personnel should have firearms. When he makes those statements is it any wonder that Canadians are paranoid that this is another step toward confiscation of their legally acquired firearms?

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I did not really hear a question, so I will comment on his comments.

At the present time we do have a registration system. A firearm can be tracked: where it was manufactured, through the distributor, wholesaler, retailer, to the end purchaser. However, to do that requires hundreds of hours to go through the ledgers of various organizations.

The kind of system that I envision would be almost like a charge card. All the rifles would be shown in black print. We would instantly be able to locate a rifle by running it through the network, which would reduce the cost and time which is now required.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have always found the hon. member to be very reasonable.

Has he done a poll in his constituency? If he has not, will he, and will he follow his constituents' advice on this issue?

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, no, I have not. Yes, I am reasonable. I will pursue the same privileges as the hon. member from Edmonton; I will follow my conscience.

[Translation]

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C-68 respecting firearms. I am somewhat surprised with what I heard in this debate, which I have been following from the beginning. I noticed antagonistic positions. I noticed, coming perhaps a little more often from our colleagues from the Reform Party, arguments that seem disproportionate and highly questionable to me. I will get back to this in my remarks.

Let me tell you right away that I agree with the principle of the bill introduced by the Minister of Justice. I will start with a brief outline of the bill, and then move to the basis for my supporting it.

Bill C-68 establishes a licensing system for the carrying and use of firearms.

This bill also establishes a Canada-wide firearms registration system. I raise these two points immediately because, from what