

Gun Control

An analysis of the number of firearm incidents involving individuals with FACs would probably provide an indication of the influence of the system. However, none of our data sources, including police occurrence reports from the local jurisdictions, record whether involved individuals have a FAC.

That makes it clear that the whole premise on which FACs were brought in, which was to provide information to the courts and the police departments in relation to firearm incidents, has been demonstrated not to be operating at all in any jurisdiction in Canada.

The third quote reads:

We cannot make a direct causal connection between these provisions and any reduction in the number of firearm incidents.

I do not think any stronger statement can be made about firearm acquisition certificates than that in the final study. There is no direct relation in terms of the reduction of firearm incidents. Clearly that system, particularly in northern, rural and remote Canada, is an absolute failure.

With regard to the situation in Canada in terms of the search and seizure of a dwelling house without a warrant, peace officers have all of the powers which they require to do everything surrounding those kinds of incidents by involving a magistrate on the one hand or being involved in hot pursuit. This section in my own constituency has been abused. In light of the provisions in our Charter of 1982, this section should be struck down both on constitutional grounds and on the grounds that I have laid out in terms of the study that has been carried out over the last six years.

Concerning the elimination of firearm acquisition certificates, I think the information is overwhelming that this has turned into nothing more than bureaucratic regulation that is harmful to safe, honest gun handling Canadians who shoot a little trap, a little target, or carry a firearm on a trap line or go hunting from time to time.

In the next 45 minutes I would encourage someone on the government side to speak in support of this Bill, because when I appeared before the legislative committee the government Members who did speak spoke very much in favour of it. I thought perhaps today the Hon. Member for Mission—Port Moody (Mr. St. Germain) would be here because he said:

—Mr. Chairman, that I am in agreement with the Hon. Member from Skeena.

And the Chair was clearly very supportive in his remarks.

I would hope that over the next 45 minutes we will hear from the Government because I have suggested to my colleagues in the Opposition that we would like to hear from government Members why they support or do not support Bill C-213. I know that I have received letters from people from every province and from both territories in support of this Bill. Many government Members, before being elected, said that they were very much in support of this Bill, so I would hope that we will hear from them their support for it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to speak to Bill C-213, which concerns gun control.

The Bill raises a number of concerns that are felt not only in my riding but across this country. Gun control relates to the very nature of our individual freedoms in a free and democratic society. This question also relates to public safety, and is thus of interest to all Canadians. That is one of the reasons why the very issue of gun control is so controversial and why opinions on gun control are so diametrically opposed.

The use of firearms in sports, for recreation and for survival has been part of our Canadian heritage for over four centuries, and the tradition continues today. In fact, since its introduction at the beginning of Confederation, gun control has been an important part of Canada's social policy. Today, it is not the principle of gun control itself that is being challenged, because measures that prevent the criminal and irresponsible use of firearms deserve our support. However, I believe the Government should try and strike a sensible balance between the need for protecting the public and the legitimate interests of owners and users of firearms. To achieve this balance, it is important that the House consider all those who are affected before amending the existing legislation. And this brings me, Mr. Speaker, to the proposal made by the Hon. Member for Skeena.

The Hon. Member would like to see abolished the right to search and seize, without a warrant, firearms, ammunition and other explosive substances in a dwelling house. Mr. Speaker, in my view, this provision is in the sections of the Criminal Code dealing with firearms for a very good reason. As the House is aware, many crimes, especially murders, are committed in the course of family or neighbourhood fights. Firearms are involved in most cases.

By adopting subsection 101(2) which allows search and seizure without a warrant, Parliament wanted the police to be able to seize firearms and ammunition and explosive substances in family fights, to prevent a tragedy. Whether a firearm is seized or not, the police officer must subsequently report to the court to justify the action taken, this to prevent arbitrary seizures and the harassment of innocent people.

Family quarrels break out suddenly and police are quickly called on the scene. Apparently the Hon. Member would seek to make it more difficult for police to take effective action in such cases, and to prevent them from conducting searches and seize firearms to avoid the possibility of a quarrel ending in a fatal accident. He would rather have police wait patiently for a provincial court magistrate to complete the search warrant application forms while their services may be urgently required elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I have always been concerned over human rights violations and police power abuses. Still, in cases such as I described which may lead to death or serious injuries, I