

Gun Control

safe control of firearms. We do not have that element in this particular Bill before us. Rather, we have a bureaucratic nightmare which will harm ordinary Canadian citizens who enjoy hunting. There are many native Canadians in my riding and the ridings of my colleagues who still hunt as part of their traditional way of life. So we have to speak in opposition to this Bill.

We believe there should be adequate training courses sponsored by the federal Government, much more than there are at present. While I am sure it was not intended, this Bill has harmed real efforts to provide adequate gun control in this country because it is too extreme. In the same way, those people who have ranted and raved against the Bill have also harmed their own cause. Having seen some of the ads and circulars which have gone out over the past two years, I am ashamed of what some of my fellow Canadians have said against this Bill. It is creating here an American type of paranoia which we see there whenever it comes to gun control legislation. We do not want to become like that. We do not want to have groups running around the country sponsoring one person or fighting another person on this issue and giving great hunks of money to one person or one Party. Gun control is a serious issue, one which must be covered by adequate legislation, and it is up to us to make sure that such legislation is reasonable.

● (1640)

I am concerned that many Canadians will get the firearms possession certificate that is called for in the Bill and, as a result, will become criminals. We should never make laws that make ordinary Canadians become criminals by an action which, in itself, is not harmful to other Canadians.

People who live in cities often do not understand why people who live in the North or in other rural areas or parts of western Canada, want guns. I do not believe that Canadians have the right to bear arms at all times in all circumstances, but in a riding such as mine or that of the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) or that of the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis), or of the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly), there are vast areas where, just a few miles from home, people can go hunting. Hunting has become part of the tradition. I am not referring only to native people but also to white residents of those communities.

It is very hard for some people to understand that others enjoy hunting or that by hunting the food bill can be cut. Unlike someone who lives in Toronto or Montreal or even Vancouver, those of us from rural ridings do not have to travel great distances in order to go hunting, nor do we have to put up at an expensive lodge. In my riding I can walk across the street into the wilderness. These are aspects of the question that should be debated seriously. However, Mr. Speaker, I am ashamed of some of the things I have heard said about the Bill.

The Hon. Member who introduced the Bill said guns—he was referring to long guns, a term I have not heard for a long

time—were the only commodity that can be bought by Canadian civilians which will harm other people. In saying that, he is raising the level of debate on this issue.

An Hon. Member: He is lowering it.

Mr. Murphy: A lot of people have a rifle for some purpose other than killing. Killing is not often taken as referring to birds or moose or other animals but as killing people.

Mr. Hopkins: He was lowering the level of debate. You said he was raising it.

Mr. Murphy: I am sorry. He certainly was lowering the level of the debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Would the Hon. Member please address the Chair.

Mr. Murphy: I was glad to see that Members of the Official Opposition did not take a highly partisan position in the debate, because it is true that when the original gun control legislation was introduced, the three opposition Parties in the House at that time opposed the Bill for some of the reasons I have mentioned. It is interesting to note that even at that time only 30 Conservatives showed up to vote against the Bill. On July 18, 1977, the recorded vote was yeas 95, nays 40, of whom 30 Members were Conservatives.

An Hon. Member: How many NDP?

Mr. Murphy: There were eight in the House and at that time there were only 15 NDP Members, so it was more than half.

If the Government is to bring in any Bill similar to C-451, it is important that such legislation be acceptable to Canadians in that it recognizes the different regions in the country. It is important that it be legislation that most Canadians can accept, not just some people in some urban areas.

Mr. Ellis: How about giving someone else a chance to speak? There are 18 Members waiting.

Mr. Murphy: The Hon. Member asks me to give someone else a chance to speak. That is interesting because I listened to the Members of that Party who spoke already, and I hope they will extend me the same courtesy. There are Members of all Parties who wish to speak on the Bill, I am sure. One of the problems with Private Members' hour is that it is just that, an hour. As I indicated the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap wishes to oppose the Bill, the Hon. Member for Skeena wishes to speak in opposition to it and some other Members of this Party wish to speak as well. I find it interesting that the Hon. Member who spoke ahead of me listed more Conservatives who wished to speak against the Bill than voted against a similar Bill some years ago.

It is important that crime be controlled, Mr. Speaker, especially crime committed with firearms. I do not think the Bill will achieve that. Rather, it will create a massive bureaucracy where people in the areas I have mentioned will, first of