

*Government Orders*

If the Liberal Party would allow a free vote on this bill I think we would really see whether there is broad public support for this. We would see whether that is true, as the minister claims.

I think it would prove that the Liberal Party believes in true democracy between elections as well as during them. I wish it would come clean on this issue and allow that free vote to take place.

Whether a Canadian is a gun owner or not here are some principles on which this legislation should be judged. I encourage every voter to inform themselves, to judge this legislation against their own personal beliefs, not what the government, not what the media, not what the politicians are telling them. This is one nasty piece of legislation. It will affect not only our lives but also the lives of our children and our grandchildren.

The Minister of Justice is right, the legislation is about the kind of country we want to live in. Canadians owe it to themselves and the next generation to get it right. Their safety, the safety of their families, their friends, their homes and their properties is at stake.

If Canadians believe in less government and less bureaucracy then they will not support this gun control bill. If Canadians believe in less government spending then they will not support this bill. If Canadians believe in lower taxes, they will not support this gun control bill. If Canadians believe in personal freedom and personal responsibility, then they will not support this gun control legislation. If Canadians believe in every citizen's right to private property, then they will definitely not support this gun control legislation.

• (1525)

If Canadians believe in true equality and that the law should be applied equally regardless of their race or where they live, then they will not like what they read in this gun control bill. If Canadians believe in every citizen's constitutional right to life, liberty and security of the person, then they will oppose this gun control bill with every ounce of energy they have.

If Canadians believe in everyone's right and responsibility to defend themselves, their family, their property and their home, as described in the Criminal Code of Canada, then they will not like what they read in this gun control bill. If Canadians believe the federal government should not interfere in areas of provincial jurisdiction, then they will not support this gun control bill.

A recent survey conducted by Simon Fraser University learned that support for the Liberal Party's firearm registration system drops significantly as the respondents' knowledge of existing gun control laws increases and the full cost of the measures is understood.

In his attempts to confuse the issue of gun control with the issue of crime control, the minister has included some things in

his legislation which I support. I maintain that if the Minister of Justice is really interested in public safety he will divide this bill into two parts. Part one would be crime control and part two would be gun control. Even though there are some monumental flaws with the crime control provisions of the bill, I think we could fix those and ensure easy passage through the House so that the police could use these tools to put real criminals behind bars where they should be.

Here is a list of measures in the bill which I think could be modified and amended and which I could support because they truly concern crime. I would support the four-year mandatory minimum sentence for the 10 violent offences committed with a firearm as long as the word firearm was replaced with the word weapon. More people are murdered with knives and other weapons than with guns. I think any criminal who uses a weapon in the commission of a crime should be subject to the same mandatory jail term.

I support using section 85 of the Criminal Code effectively, but again this mandatory sentencing provision should be extended to any weapon used in a crime, not just firearms.

I support the lifetime prohibition from possessing a restricted weapon for the conviction of violent crimes. I also support the inclusion of replica or imitation firearms under section 85 of the Criminal Code. I support the new offences for large scale smuggling and trafficking of firearms. I support the new offences for possessing stolen or smuggled firearms of a one-year minimum jail sentence. I support adding firearms trafficking to the list of enterprise crime offences.

I oppose the banning of 553,000 handguns. I oppose the banning of 19,000 restricted firearms. However, I support the proposed firearms possession certificate, in principle anyway. I support the offence for failing to report a lost or stolen firearm. I support the 10-year prohibition on possession of firearms to those convicted of serious firearms offences. I support the prohibition on possession of firearms for those convicted of stalking and drug offences. I support the tighter border controls, the inspection procedures by Canada customs. Also, I support the forfeiture of vehicles used in smuggling contraband and the proceeds of smuggling activities. I support the requirement for import-export permits for firearms moving across the border for commercial use.

I also support the requirement to record the entry or exit of firearms to or from Canada by tourists and outfitters. I add that these people bring hundreds of millions of dollars into our country, creating thousands of jobs and tourists should not be needlessly harassed at our borders.

I support the provision of minor's permits for persons between 12 and 18 to acquire firearms. I support the extension of authority to approve firearm safety courses to the provinces.