

*Government Orders*

and that it is the instrument that we somehow have to do something about.

The automobile also kills many people. We have had as a society a more mature attitude about how we regulate the automobile. We do not start from the perception that the automobile is wrong. We start from the perception that we will train the operator through written and oral examinations, and then in skill testing. I believe that ought to happen also with the gun.

One ought not to be able to use a gun unless able to demonstrate competence. One should be required to demonstrate competence not only on physical skill, but on mental security. I believe that those persons to whom I have spoken—members in gun organizations or those who use guns as a means to their livelihood—would subscribe to that.

As a member of Parliament from a rural region of Canada, I can tell you, Sir, that I do not desire, any more than any urban person anywhere, to have a gun in the hands of a lunatic. But there is that funny notion that when these awful, tragic, deplorable, emotional situations take place in our country, such as that at École Polytechnique about a year ago, that somehow if we attack the instrument, we will achieve justice. The person who committed that crime was mad. Everything about him demonstrated that he was a person filled with anger. It would be naive in the unfortunate extreme for us to presume that, had we at some earlier period of time abolished every gun in the country, the crime would not have taken place in some other way. I know that statistics do not in any situation necessarily establish proof.

With regard to training and skills, I would give the example of Switzerland. Because Switzerland does not have an armed forces as such, but requires that every male aged 18 and over must have a high powered rifle in their possession and be trained to use it. They undergo training. One of the things that is observable about Switzerland is it has one of the western world's lowest incidences of crimes with a gun and yet it is a nation in which virtually every home has a gun. I submit that what has been wrong through a history of almost 20 years now is that we have approached this issue from the perspective that we have to control the gun, rather than to somehow control licensed safe operation of the person.

• (1340)

The other area that I wish to mention is that, for those regions of the country where guns are used in the line of work or as a tool to a livelihood, ambiguity in the regulatory process causes a great concern. People know who the regulators are and they know it is largely urban Canada. It is the bureaucrats of Ottawa. They are very fine people and many of them are very, very hard working, but there are not many people in the rural and northern regions of Canada who believe that their views will be expressed in a change in the regulation. They want a consultative process that designs the right legislation and fixes it specifically.

If we leave lots of changes for the regulatory process, where many things can be changed at whim, it will never be changed with the consultation of rural Canada. That fear must be set aside. I say to you, Sir, it is not difficult to set it aside.

I am absolutely convinced of it and I am pleased that we have been effective in asking the minister to go one consultative process further in an attempt to draft legislation that, on the one hand will make urban Canada say that this is safe and this is good, and on the other hand those who use a gun in of their day-to-day lives will also come to the conclusion that this is acceptable, that this is reasonable, and that we can endorse it. I am fully convinced that that kind of balance can be achieved.

The first objective should be to set aside the notion that it is the instrument that is wrong and come to a far higher and more intense training in the skills and the use, and the testing of the persons competence, both mentally and physically, to use that weapon. When we do, hopefully, we will have a safer society and a more trusted one for all sectors of our country.

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech. I enjoyed the way he makes a presentation. I agree with him on the over-all position that there are two constituencies out there, rural and urban, if you like, and that we must find a way of bringing them both together with workable gun control. That is, gun control which works for rural people as well. We are in agreement there, but our agreement stops there.