

Government Orders

reflects a glaring lack of efficiency on the part of the government in an area directly related to public safety. It took less time to set up a unity Canada group. I think this is indicative of a glaring lack of efficiency that should be pointed out.

Of course, the goal in itself is commendable and we support it but how effective will the bill really be? First of all, not all countries signed the convention or belong to the International Civil Aviation Organization. This means that terrorists will still be able to obtain explosives in non member countries where plastic explosives will remain unmarked.

We put a question to our hon. colleague who said that, as far as terrorist groups were concerned, Canada could not say who did or did not sell explosives to them. We stress the fact that the federal government is not clear, as our colleague just indicated, that explosives are obtained in part on the black market. We did not need to be told that. We already knew that this was the case. We also knew that some of them are home made. But who on the black market supplies terrorists? Who are the people operating this black market? These questions remain unanswered.

In many regards, Canada is like a sieve for contraband goods. I am thinking about drugs in particular. It is well known that, in a way, Canada is the North American entry point for drugs and certainly for part of the weapons smuggled into the continent. It is a fact that certain groups are currently using this channel and that, in many cases, they are more heavily armed than the police and even the Canadian armed forces.

• (1330)

One wonders what specific measures will be taken in this bill to counteract such effects. Canada has problems controlling liquor and tobacco smuggling. It is therefore extremely difficult to imagine that a bill such as this one, in spite of all its positive measures, will effectively prevent the smuggling of explosives.

Explosives manufactured for military purposes are totally exempt from marking requirements, and we can understand that. Obviously, military people do not want to make their arms easy to detect; that would make no sense. Nevertheless, there is the possibility of leaks.

One can also think of the motorcycle gang war currently going in the Montreal region, another reason to be cautious in this regard. In recent months, there have been numerous victims, mostly gang members, but also innocent people.

Incidentally, I want to thank a group, the Oir Rachaim Tasher Yesheva Jewish congregation, in Boisbriand, for immediately coming to the help of injured persons during one incident. The compassion and the support shown by that community deserve to be mentioned.

As regards the gang war, I also want to stress the work of the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve who helped start a

petition in his riding, asking for anti-gang legislation, and who organized, for the benefit of many Montreal area MPs meetings with police officers of the city, including Mr. Sangollo, who is the assistant to the chief of police, Mr. Duchesneau. These officers gave us an idea of who these motorcycle gangs are and what is organized crime.

We were clearly told about the need for anti-gang legislation. The House should seriously consider such legislation. I am well aware that this would not be easy, since we would have to specifically define what constitutes a criminal gang.

That is not an easy thing to do. We must, of course, take the charter of rights and freedoms into account, but I think we must eventually find or come as close as possible to finding the exact words we need to counter the real damage done by these gangs. When I talk about these gangs, I am talking not only about criminal bikers but also about the mafia, the Chinese triads, the Japanese yakuza and the Russian mafia that is now spreading to all industrialized countries and especially to Canada since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

I think that this bill as it now stands certainly deserves to be supported because it is a step in the right direction, but I think it is not nearly enough, under the circumstances, to restore the feeling of safety that Canadians may have lost or are now losing.

I would like to close by repeating a few words that my colleague from Matapédia—Matane said in his first speech on this bill, because they are words of wisdom. My colleague said this: "You can mark the explosives you make as much as you want, but unless you take real measures against violence, organized gangs and terrorism, you are simply wasting your time".

[English]

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to rise in the House to address third reading debate on Bill C-71, an act to amend the Explosives Act.

I am happy to inform the House that my party is supporting Bill C-71. I will not go on at great length to discuss the bill because of that support. It is good to see legislation come forward in the House which is required and which we can support because so often legislation has been flawed.

My one criticism of the business of the House has been that we have had to deal with a lot of rather inconsequential legislation. While Bill C-71 is important, all members of the House would have passed the bill rather quickly. It has not received much obstruction. It seems odd that we are spending so much time on these bills of little consequence when there are issues like the national debt and deficit to deal with. UI reform is needed. Health care reform is needed. Those areas are being ignored by the government.