

Measures Against Crime

getting them. There are always people standing around looking for these types of positions. However, one must ask what their responsibilities will really be. Will they have any responsibilities apart from guaranteeing that someone should have a licence? If they do, then I do not think there will be many people willing to take on this kind of task.

At any rate in many of the small communities in Canada I do not really believe there will be too many people who will want to take on this kind of chore without having or accepting some other responsibility, and therefore I do not believe it will be very easy to convince people to accept the position of a guarantor for an applicant for a licence to obtain a gun. These guarantors will not be concerned so much about the multitude of people whom they guarantee for licences but rather about the few about whom they are not certain whether they should or should not have a gun.

What about the innocent-type looking person who comes to them for a licence and then later shows that he is not responsible enough to own a gun? How does one determine mental stability? Will someone who has had mental problems at some time or other, especially in his childhood, be forever considered mentally unstable? How do you know that a person has never had any medication for mental instability? In many cases parents have sought help for what they thought were their disturbed children. Are these children to be charged with mental instability for the rest of their lives? For the parents who did not seek help there really is no record, so they do not have to answer for these children. Persons who sought and received help could now have much better mental stability, but now they have a record which will follow them and therefore they might be discriminated against.

A great number of people are now concerned about the cost of the fee for the licence. Just how much bureaucracy will there be in order to licence all these people? This concern is real because under this legislation the cost of the licence will be relative to the operational costs of the bureaucracy. This is not very easy in these times of big governments and Parkinson's law. So this has become a very big issue. Has the government made any study to determine what the cost will be? How will it explain it to people if the cost is somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$50 per licence? I understand that the cost of a licence in New York is around \$100.

What about people who are moving around Canada? They can get a licence for five years but they must be known for two years in the community in which they reside by the guarantors who have been designated. We all know that workers travel around in different parts of Canada. The recently released report of the Economic Council of Canada shows this very clearly. How can a person have his licence renewed if he is not known in the community?

Another group of people about whom we are concerned are the American hunters coming to Canada. How will they get a licence? This question is being asked by many guides across Canada who have set up a hunting business for American hunters. In general these are not small businesses but big businesses, and answers to these questions must be forthcoming. Will the treatment accorded hunters from abroad differ from that accorded to our own? This matter should be clarified.

[Mr. Whittaker.]

I should like to take this opportunity to read into the record parts of two excellent letters which I have received from my constituents. The first comes from Grand Forks, British Columbia. It reads:

I have been able to exercise my vote for well over 20 years and other than that do not become deeply involved in politics. Over the years, however, many policies, regulations, restrictions, etc. that the government has brought about have been, in my opinion, ridiculous—

However, the purpose of my letter is to express my views on the upcoming firearms regulations. I recently had the opportunity to thumb through the 30 some odd page proposal, some of which makes sense, some is tolerable. The majority, however, is once again, I feel, ridiculous.

I do not wish to pick at individual items as this would involve a 40 page summary, so will take a general approach.

I own some firearms, I thoroughly enjoy the outdoors in every respect and normally get a little hunting in each fall. However, I am not a gun collector nor a hand load buff.

I am familiar enough with firearms and laws to be certain that no one would purchase a gun, register it, try and obtain a carrying permit, then go and commit a crime. Anyone who is capable of bank robbery, murder or whatever, will have no reservation about stealing the gun. If offensive weapons are to be registered then one may list the following, knives of all kinds with blades over three inches, finger nail files, hammers, axes, clubs baseball bats, golf clubs, broken bottles, fists, wrenches, tire irons, etc., etc., etc. The above items are frequently used as a tool to create bodily harm or used in a threat.

The papers and newscasts are constantly reporting people killed in car accidents, plane crashes, drownings, house fires and the like. Everyone that is injured or killed certainly has not been shot—so why pick on guns? Alcohol and drugs cripple, mentally distort, and generate more crimes, so why not attack the source rather than pick on guns? Not long ago some teenage children in an institution held officials captive with broken glass, as a weapon. Just prior to that, inmates in a prison held guards captive at knife point. No guns were involved in these and numerous other cases—

It is our tax dollars that apprehend and convict these people then go on to support all their demands. This adds up to many thousands of dollars per prisoner per year, year after year, after year.

Not long ago a habitual drug user was apprehended with several thousand dollars worth of hard drugs in his possession, for the purpose of trafficking. The volume of drugs in his possession was enough to bend several people out of shape for the rest of their lives. Many weeks and a terrific amount of money, tax money, was spent to give this person a fair trial. I understand he was fined \$350 and turned loose to pick up where he left off on the streets.

A great deal of time and money has been spent in the past in legislating laws and regulations. A good many of these are directed at gun control. This is good. I am certainly in favour of laws and regulations that will afford a safe society for my family and I to survive in, but let's take a long hard look at what we have and where the real problems are rather than point a finger at another surface object which generates more legislation, more laws, more tax dollars spent, restricts the "Joe Blow" type and if anything, gives the criminal more protection.

● (1520)

In review I am suggesting that . . . Adequate laws relating to firearms control have been made—so "enforce them" . . . Deal with the crime and criminals in the same fashion that they deal with society—"harshly".

Another letter comes from a lady in Penticton, B.C.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCleave): Perhaps the Chair should raise the point, since the hon. member has quoted quite extensively from a letter which was sent to him, that the usual practice in this House in the past under these circumstances has been that the writer of the communication should be identified.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Speaker, I have the letter here, and I would be only too pleased to send it up and have it—