

required by virtue of their jobs to exist in the northern wilderness. I suggest that the provisions with respect to licensing are simply impractical as far as the native peoples are concerned, and an exception should be made in that regard as well.

● (2040)

I hope that when this kind of legislation is planned in the future there will be some consultation with the people of the north through their elected representatives who sit on the respective territorial councils. The day is long gone when this kind of legislation can be prepared without that kind of consultation, notwithstanding what the Solicitor General says, both in this House and in the pamphlet he distributed to hon. members and others entitled "Questions and Answers Regarding Proposed Gun Control Legislation".

In that pamphlet the question is asked: was the hunting community consulted before this bill was drafted? The answer given is: it was. I say it was not. Certainly it was not in the Yukon, and it was not in the Northwest Territories. The answer goes on to say the following:

Wide consultations preceded the drafting of the proposed legislation and many briefs from organizations of responsible gun-users and other interested bodies were received.

Prominent among those who submitted briefs were the Canadian Wildlife Federation . . .

In almost the same mail in which I received that interesting pamphlet from the minister I received a critique from the Canadian Wildlife Federation dated March of 1976 analyzing Bill C-83, and on page 10 of that critique the committee of the Canadian Wildlife Federation says the following:

Finally, the committee questions the manner in which the government prepared this draft legislation, draft legislation that has been in preparation for well over a year. Despite the fact that one of its main features would impose a licensing requirement on some two million Canadians, there has been no meaningful consultation with interested groups, and the over-all approach the government intended was a matter of mystery until the bill was tabled. The CWF offered to explain its position and to help in the collection of relevant information, but its offer was not even acknowledged.

There we have the Canadian Wildlife Federation denying the words of the minister in the House today, and denying the printed pamphlet, produced at government expense, saying that the government had consulted with the Canadian Wildlife Federation. Obviously they are at odds. Perhaps the government feels that tabling and exposing the bill is consultation, but that is not my idea of consultation, and it obviously is not that of the Canadian Wildlife Federation.

I do not think my mail has been unique, and I do not think the mail of any hon. members of this House, whether they be Liberal, NDP, Social Credit or Conservative, has been unique. I have received more letters and more complaints from my constituents on the gun control feature of this bill than on any other single subject. It has exceeded the correspondence I have received on such matters as abortion, capital punishment, and the like. In all my time here I have never had such an inundation of objections to a piece of legislation as the objections I have received with respect to this bill. That fact surely has been conveyed by the Liberal caucus to the cabinet, and every speech which

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has been made from this side which I have heard or read has conveyed the same thing. Surely that must carry some kind of message to the government that the legislation is lacking, that it is improper, and that there is a great need to amend it.

My voice here and the voice of my neighbour from the Northwest Territories are two small voices in this Chamber when it comes to legislation of this kind. There are only two members here for that 40 per cent of Canada, so perhaps we do not carry much weight, but there are 75,000 to 80,000 Canadian souls living in the north whose livelihood for the most part depends on the right to the free use of firearms.

I urge upon the government now, in the absence of the consultation there should have been, to heed my words and those of my neighbour from the Northwest Territories, and to incorporate the amendments we have both suggested into this bill. Otherwise it is going to work extreme hardship and, perhaps not inconceivably tragedy on certain families and individuals in the two northern territories.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Pinard (Drummond):** Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the second reading debate on Bill C-83, many members have departed from the discussion on the principle of the bill to take out some excerpts, isolate them from their context, interpret them subjectively and as a result draw false and erroneous conclusions, losing sight of the true spirit of the legislation. I therefore feel I must take part in this debate to reiterate and analyze briefly Bill C-83 as a whole and its various general provisions.

Although I want to stress the intent of the bill, this does not mean that I think that some of its provisions may not be amended at the later stages of its study, so as to perfect it and make it more consistent with reality. In fact, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) already suggested that some amendments could be made to that effect. Rising crime rates, including rates of violent crime, are bringing home to Canadians that changes in the criminal law and in the administration of criminal justice are needed if the best possible protection is to be afforded to the public. The whole apparatus of criminal justice exists first and foremost to protect society against the effects of crime. Crime in Canada is not out of control, but it is much easier to maintain control than to regain it. It is for this reason that the Government is now putting forward the Peace and Security Program, a series of measures to amend the criminal law and improve the administration of criminal justice. These measures are designed to come to grips with the increasing incidence of crime in Canadian society and to meet the need the public feels for a greater measure of protection.

Public concerns focus upon the increase in violent crime; the difficulty encountered by the law officers in contending with the "untouchables" of organized crime; repeated crimes committed by accused persons released on bail; a few spectacular crimes committed by persons released mandatorily from federal institutions, by parolees and by offenders on temporary absence from prison; disturbances and hostage-taking in penitentiaries; repeated crimes by offenders who seem to be chronically violent; and finally, the tragic and spectacular crimes involving the use of firearms.