

Pursuant to Standing Order 37, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### CRIMINAL CODE

#### MEASURE TO AMEND

**Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener)** moved that Bill C-324, an act to amend the Criminal Code (firearms), be read the second time and referred to Legislative Committee H.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of my bill is to send a powerful message of deterrence to anyone who is thinking about taking a gun along to commit a crime. This bill would toughen section 85 of the Criminal Code in that the minimum mandatory sentences would be increased from one year to five years for a first offence and raised from three years to eight years for any subsequent offences. The sentence imposed under section 85 would be served consecutively to the main offence, which means that it would be added on after serving the first offence.

Second, there would be no eligibility for parole during the five years.

Third, this bill would also specifically prevent the mandatory sentence from having any impact on the sentence imposed for the other offence.

Fourth, this bill also requires the written consent of the provincial Attorney General before any section 85 charge could be withdrawn or plea-bargained away.

I had the privilege of chairing the special committee on the subject matter of Bill C-80 on firearms. I am pleased to say that all but a few of the recommendations out of the 33 were adopted in a much improved bill on firearms, Bill C-17, which is now the law of Canada.

I am particularly pleased that both the Criminal Code and the regulations on the illegitimate use of firearms, which the Minister of Justice tabled this morning, have within them some tough new measures targeting the

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criminal use of firearms. There is now a 10-year maximum sentence for the possession of prohibited weapons. That also applies to possession of a firearm while under a prohibition order. Third, it applies to importing, buying or selling of prohibited weapons.

Additionally, stronger prohibition orders were implemented, meaning that the courts are now required to consider prohibition and the seizure of a firearm in all bail or release proceedings involving offences where the use or threat of violence occurs.

Finally, the duration of court prohibition orders has been increased from five to 10 years for a first conviction, and from 10 years to life for repeat offenders.

I am confident that had those measures been in place a few years ago that some Canadians would be alive today and not the tragic victims of the criminal use of firearms.

Two committees, the one I chaired and subsequently the legislative committee on Bill C-17, heard some specific comments regarding the subject matter of the bill I am proposing today. I would like to read some of them into the record.

Mr. Ronald Gladish, the first vice-president of the Canadian Wildlife Federation asked:

Where are the minimum three to five year penalties for the use of firearms during the commission of an offence, as recommended by the Special Committee on Bill C-80?

This bill addresses that omission.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters said:

The provision for mandatory additional jail terms for the use of a firearm in the commission of a crime, must be fully enacted and enforced as mandatory.

In response to a question about a five-year minimum sentence, Mr. Dare of the Service Rifle Association answered, and I quote:

What we are saying is that five-year mandatory would soon get the message across that a firearm is not acceptable if you carry it concealed, illegally or if it is stolen.

Mr. Beauchesne the Technical Adviser for Law and Amendments Committee of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police said, and I quote:

All police officers and Canadians are asking that zero tolerance be given toward those who commit crimes with firearms.

Ms. Wendy Cukier of the Coalition for Gun Control remarked: