

*Government Orders*

shown. Is there anything else we can do to make it easier for those who wish to steal guns?

What of the innocent people who register their guns? Are they sitting ducks—no pun intended—for criminals who break the code and enter the gun registration system? Why would we create such a monster if it is not going to do any good, if it is not going to reduce the number of crimes of violence, murders, attempted murders or suicides?

Create the shop at home channel for guns, rifles and shotguns. I do not think so. However, I am certain there is a part of our population that would not object if Rogers Cablevision carried this channel.

There are good parts in this bill which should be studied in committee and perhaps even made stronger. This is a very good reason to split Bill C-68.

First, I agree there should be a separate criminal offence for committing or attempting to commit a crime with a gun. The problem with it is as proposed is that it may very well be bargained away as part of a plea bargain for a guilty plea for some other charge.

Members of the justice committee should take a hard look at this. They should try to determine whether they can legislate that the offence not be subject to a plea bargain or find some other solution. A clear message must be sent to the criminal community in Canada that if criminals carry guns and commit crimes, they will be punished for the crime and for carrying the weapon.

I am also supportive of those parts of the bill which would attack the problem of gun smuggling in Canada. We live next to, arguably, one of the most violent nations on the face of the earth. It is vitally important that those who patrol our borders be given real powers to deal with those who would import guns illegally into Canada.

Again, this is something the justice committee should look at in detail. Should the people who patrol our borders be given powers to be more than revenue collectors? Should the provincial police or RCMP in particular provinces be required to maintain a presence at the borders? A true police presence at our borders would, to my way of thinking, reduce smuggling. I am not saying we should arm our customs agents, but they should be backed up by trained police.

There are other matters which must be looked at in this legislation, for example the position of those who wish to will their gun collections as part of their estate. I believe we should facilitate this. The requirement for those entering Canada to take part in marksmanship contests to obtain a temporary certificate should be looked at to see if it is realistic and workable.

Most of all, I urge members opposite, members from outside metropolitan Toronto as well as inside, to look at Canada and see

it for what it is, a vast country where hunting and other outdoor activities are both a way of life to some and a recreation to others.

The registration system proposed in this bill as it sits will not accomplish the goal set for it. Therefore, when it comes time to vote for this bill, or that part on gun registration during clause by clause analysis, vote down those clauses that pertain to the registration system.

**Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on Bill C-68, an act respecting firearms and other weapons.

• (1730)

The riding of Durham has both a rural and an urban component. Being neither a gun owner or user myself, I have gone to the shooting clubs and have listened to the concerns of legal gun owners. I have taken both gun owners and those abused by guns to meet with the Minister of Justice.

I have studied the crime statistics of both the justice department and the gun lobby. I have spoken with our police chief, the local firearms registration officer, judges, police in the field, homicide detectives and finally, I visited Millhaven penitentiary and spoke with murderers in their cells who actually used guns in the commission of crime.

Tougher penalties for the use of firearms in the commission of a crime, tougher controls of cross-border smuggling and trafficking of firearms are all supported by the people of Durham, including legal gun owners.

Rather than looking at the strengths of the legislation I would like to focus on what I see as some weaknesses. Hopefully these matters will be addressed at the committee stage of the bill. I would like to address the matter of the registration of all firearms. As you know, Mr. Speaker, handguns in Canada have had to be registered since the 1940s. I note this has contributed little to the reduction of the use of handguns in the commission of crime.

Primarily the issue for me is one of cost benefit analysis. What are the costs? Who is going to pay? What are the benefits of the system? This revisits the very foundations of our democracy which is that government has entered into a contract with the people. This is Locke's *Two Treatises on Government*. In the 15th century Locke determined that a fundamental democracy was one where people consented to be governed based on an unwritten contract with their government, a contract that implied a basic consent of the people not only to be governed but also, most importantly, to be taxed.

People want to revisit their contract with government. They want to know how taxes are consensual. They want to be part of the process. They want to be included with regard to the taxes they pay and the programs they finance. Across the nation people are demanding more accountability from governments.