

Government Orders

• (1715)

We are left with registration, the only other problem we can have now. The minister has repeatedly told us today that it will be cheap. It may be free. I am talking about registration. It may be free and will be very reasonable. I am talking about people. I am talking about the gun owners.

It is difficult for the Reform Party to relate that I am talking about individuals. It is talking about the 85 million, because it does not know how to associate an issue with individuals. That is what we are talking about here today. The cost will be very reasonable. It will be efficient.

After we had our discussions, our rallies, the pro-gun groups were still not satisfied. I understand it was because there was so much wrong information going around. On their behalf I asked the justice minister to come to our region to talk to the people who are against him.

As backbenchers they say we do not count in this House and cannot do a thing. We, the backbenchers, were able to ask our Minister of Justice to come to our communities to talk to the people who are working against him. Tell me another country where that happens. That does not even happen in the United States, a democracy. However, in Canada it does because we have a Minister of Justice who cares about people, individuals. He covered six ridings.

It was suggested that we invite four individuals in each riding. I invited the president of the local gun club. I did not try to dodge the issue, did I? I invited the president of the local gun club who was against the legislation and probably still is. I will have to phone him when I get back home.

I invited the president of the fish and game association, who is adamantly against it. He bought a membership in my riding and he was going to the annual meeting in Toronto, and we did not try to stop him or railroad the meeting. We welcomed him. To balance the load, I invited the crown attorney because they meet the victims.

My fourth candidate was Dr. Bota who works in emergency at Sudbury General Hospital. This is the individual who meets the victims, sometimes teenagers who try to commit suicide with these long rifles lying around uncontrolled in their homes. They blow off half their face. He works on them for hours and hours. He saves them and tries to rebuild their features. These young people are still alive. They are discouraged individuals. If we can save one of them, it is worth it. One in a hundred years is worth it.

Let one go. It is just an individual. That is what I am hearing—embarrassing. The hard core individuals said the figures were all wrong in Dr. Bota's study, who had just marked real cases, a real scientific poll.

Canadians have asked us to do something for them. They have asked us to make Canada safe. The women of Sudbury who are walking one night a year to take back the streets that are too dangerous are saying do it.

I say to the minister let us do it fast, in spite of the members from the Reform, because we know the people they represent want us to do it too.

• (1720)

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I really do not know what to say about this. Most of what I heard was absolute nonsense.

Not all of what he said was nonsense. He talked about saving one life. An individual told me of this actual account where an elderly couple was driving through the United States. Somehow they got off the turnpike and down two or three miles on to a narrow road. When they ran out of gas, he took a container and tried to get back to the highway. He got lost in the woods and they never saw him again but his wife had some supplies in the motorhome and she was able to live for two weeks. She was saved by a hunter who found her. He saved one life. I agree with my hon. colleague.

There are both sides to this argument and we should recognize both sides. He has certainly taken a shot at the Reformers but he should take a look and save some of his energy in terms of discussing what we stand for and why we are against this bill. He should talk to his own backbench. He should perhaps clean up his own House if he thinks that this bill is absolutely waterproof and bulletproof. Start there.

He told the story about selling his guns to a person who had a FAC. He has over 200 guns. He told about a party and problems arising and the police being called in. It sounded to me as if everyone was going to run for a rifle.

I spent 14 years as a peace officer and I have never heard such nonsense in all my life. Even if that did happen, what difference would it make to the police or anyone else if those firearms were registered? What difference would it make? This is the essential question that we ask.

For those who commit suicide, what difference does it make if the weapons are registered? For women who are shot every six days in this country, what difference does it make? This bill does not attack the cause, domestic disputes. It does not attack the cause of suicides. That is what we are saying ought to be done.

Certainly if registration is going to reduce that, please tell us how because we do not know how. We have as much concern about these matters as anyone in the House. We have sons and daughters, brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles. They are not immune to these social problems. We have as much concern about that as anyone across the way.