

*Government Orders*

large ammunition capacities and military designs, and because they can be converted back to machine guns.

This bill will make fully automatic firearms that have been converted to semi-automatic prohibited weapons. They will also, I might add, make such conversion a criminal offence.

These firearms have been a source of growing concern, particularly over the last decade, and prohibiting them will put a stop to their importation into Canada.

The package includes a provision that would permit genuine gun collectors who already have these weapons to keep them, subject to strict limits on transfers. The RCMP will create a special registration category to track these guns and ensure that they are subject to effective controls.

The effect of these measures will be to place a ceiling on a number of these weapons and their owners in Canada. Eventually, as owners dispose of their guns, this number will be reduced and the guns will be taken out of circulation.

My colleague, the hon. Mr. Jelinek, who is responsible for Canada customs, has made it clear that these weapons will be stopped at the border, and he has already done so on the authority of several recent court cases involving the legal status of these guns.

[*Translation*]

I further intend to deal with other para-military or high firepower firearms, many of them semi-automatic, by developing criteria to distinguish between these guns and firearms commonly used for hunting or civilian sporting purposes in this country.

These distinctions would be developed to enable the government to declare specific types of firearms prohibited weapons or restricted weapons using Order in Council powers that are already contained in the Criminal Code. I believe that these standards will make it clear to everyone in Canada which types of firearms are acceptable in Canadian society and which are not. I believe that we can, and should, develop clear standards that will enable us to make this distinction.

A number of criteria have already been identified, and I hope to be in a position to begin preparing specific

Orders in Council soon. I will also refer this matter and some proposed criteria to the new Canadian Advisory Council on Firearms for their consideration.

Dealing effectively with these firearms will give voice to the belief of Canadians that firearms which are exclusively designed for warfare have no socially acceptable purpose in this country.

[*English*]

The amendments will also permit the government to prohibit cartridge magazines that have unacceptably large capacities, if they can be used in semi-automatic firearms.

There are many semi-automatic firearms in Canada that have found legitimate use for both hunting and target shooting in the hands of responsible gun owners. It is the addition of a large capacity cartridge magazine to one of these guns that can transform it from a hunting rifle into an assault weapon, capable of the tragic mayhem seen in Montreal, Stockton California, Hungerford England, or just last week in New Zealand.

Clearly, some degree of restriction on this kind of firepower is called for, and the proposed size limits for cartridge magazines will allow the government to set up effective limits with a minimum of interference for those who have legitimate uses for the guns themselves.

A 30-shot magazine is not necessary for either hunting or target shooting.

At the time I introduced this bill, I proposed some specific limits for magazine capacities. As I have said, I had proposed limits of 10 shots for handgun magazines and five shots for centrefire semi-automatic rifles and shotguns.

Since that time, I have received a number of representations from members of the firearms community suggesting that there may be legitimate uses for a few types of magazines that exceed the limits I had proposed.

I am willing to listen to suggestions for change, and I am aware of the need for some degree of flexibility in preparing these restrictions.

Indeed, Madam Speaker, that is one reason for using Orders in Council to set the limits instead of the amendments themselves.