

*Measures Against Crime*

● (2030)

I might use the same argument when speaking of the overwhelming—I think that was his word—success of the parole system. The minister says that hundreds and thousands of paroles are granted under the existing system and only a very small percentage fail, again to use his own words. So in effect what he is arguing is that because of the great number of successful paroles that are granted, the few isolated incidents of crimes by parolees should not be the reason for putting the whole parole policy in the wastebasket. But that argument can be very effectively turned around and applied to the gun situation. I say that the number of illegal uses to which firearms are put by relatively few individuals in Canada should not be the reason for imposing these onerous provisions on the majority of law abiding citizens who own guns.

I should like to draw an incident to the attention of the minister when speaking of the right to use guns in Canada. Notwithstanding the passage of this bill—and I have no doubt it will pass with the majority on the opposite side—there will still be what I consider to be a very undesirable situation. I am not familiar with how it affects the rest of Canada, although I have heard one or two speeches from this side of the House drawing attention to the non-Canadians travelling in the country bringing guns into Canada.

I draw the minister's attention to the policy which exists as it relates to those travelling along the Alaska highway. There is a large number of U.S. citizens travelling along that highway, both to and from the state of Alaska, and a large part of that group is military. The practice of the government when such vehicles enter Canada is for the customs officials to ask for the disclosure of the possession of any weapons.

A very large percentage of these travellers carry handguns and those handguns are normally carried in car glove compartments. So what is the practice? The customs official takes the handgun, without any obligation to unload it, places it in a little plastic bag which he ties at the neck, and gives it back to the traveller who replaces it in his glove compartment. He is permitted to carry that handgun in the plastic bag in the glove compartment of his car as he travels from one end of the Alaska highway to the other. There is not even a seal on it. The bag is tied with a little red ribbon. For heaven's sake, it is a plastic bag. There is no trick to getting a handgun out of a plastic bag.

Here we are in the Parliament of Canada saying in effect that there should be no ownership of handguns by Canadian citizens without a doggone good excuse to have one, yet we are permitting thousands upon thousands of non-Canadians to carry handguns in Canada. This is absolutely ludicrous. It is a situation which commends itself for immediate investigation and rectification by the government.

Then we come to the question of emergency gear when travelling in sparsely populated areas. Again this is something with which I have some experience. While it would be discomfoting to me to have to fly in isolated areas without a handgun, I can live with it. However, I would sooner carry a handgun, which I have been doing now for some 24 years in the Yukon on every flight that I have ever gone on in my own aircraft. But now that will not be

[Mr. Nielsen.]

permitted. Now I am bound to carry a rifle, if I could get a licence to carry it, but there is no way I can get a permit any longer to carry a handgun as part of the survival gear in the aircraft.

**Mr. O'Connell:** Sure you can.

**Mr. Nielsen:** No, I cannot. I have checked with those who will be asked to carry the responsibility of administering this law. I was told that I will have to get along with a rifle from now on. I do not see why I should have to live with that, but I will live with it and I will carry a rifle if, as I said, I can get a licence to do so, and I do not think it will be all that difficult.

**An hon. Member:** Get a guarantor.

**Mr. Nielsen:** That is a whole new aspect to the bill. Who is to guarantee? I always encourage trips by members of parliament to the north. The more MPs who go across the 60th parallel up to the Northwest Territories and the Yukon the better I like it, because only then will they understand the circumstances. The hon. member who intervened in a good natured way raised the question of guarantors. Who in God's white earth up there will find a guarantor for an Inuit on King Christian Island? Where are we going to find a guarantor on Baffin Island, other than in Alert or some other place?

If a family from Old Crow, for instance, is out trapping on Crow Flats, as they do for months and months, where is the Eskimo going to get his guarantor or even the paper to sign which would let him have a rifle? This is impractical. I can see this kind of regulation—as my neighbour, the hon. member for the Northwest Territories said—applied in Toronto and in Montreal. My God, I see the need for it in Montreal. I can see the need for it in Vancouver or Hamilton.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Or in the Liberal caucus.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Yes, the Liberal caucus, but by George, Sir, I cannot see the need for it in the 1,500,000 square miles above the 60th parallel.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Nielsen:** Forty per cent of Canada is populated by a total of 75,000 people, and the government is going to administer this law all over that area for the same purpose as it would in Hamilton or Toronto. Sir, this is completely impractical. I hope that the Solicitor General or the Minister of Justice, whoever is responsible for drafting the amendments, will make an absolute exception of the native peoples in the two northern territories whose very livelihood depends on owning and using a firearm. I hope that an exception will be made before the bill gets to committee.

The Solicitor General spoke this afternoon of the government incorporating amendments into the bill as a result of suggestions made from this side. I hope not only the native question in the two northern territories will be made an exception, but also that an additional exception will be made, so far as handguns are concerned, for big game guides, outfitters, prospectors, and others who are