

Criminal Code

Instead of controlling guns and their possession, he should be dealing with criminals through measures that would deter them from illegal actions. But the minister in his wisdom prefers to deal once again with firearms through Bill C-51, as he did with Bill C-83. Presumably, the Minister of Justice will some day introduce legislation putting guns in prison while criminals will go free. As far as I am concerned, the government is proposing to deal with material objects, putting the blame on them for inhuman acts by criminals and vile assassins.

Guns do not kill by themselves. Whoever saw revolvers walking down the street? They do not have the gift of motion. Punishing them for the acts committed by those who want to break the law is utterly ridiculous. But once more this year the Minister of Justice is proposing to do just that.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, gun control will victimize honest citizens, hunters and sportsmen that will have to submit to controls, while criminals will be able to do exactly as they wish, going on breaking the laws we pass in this House.

Mr. Speaker, over the weekend I had the opportunity to meet people who keep ammunition in their stores not for their own protection but for the use of hunter tourists, as I said the other week, to help them out. Of course, those hunters do not buy ammunition only, but a number of items they need for their survival in the bush.

And the minister or rather the government objected to an amendment to the bill put toward by a member of the Progressive Conservative party, asking for the withdrawal of the provision requiring the purchase of a permit to sell ammunition and even some items used for hunting purposes. The government, here again, has failed to listen to the legitimate requests of the small dealer and the small businessman who will have to pay even if it is not being done at the provincial level. A permit is sold under the provincial government authority.

I do not know whether the federal government is jealous of the revenue derived from this sale by the provincial government, but as I said, they feel obliged to interfere in an area which is not under their jurisdiction but which is specifically under the provincial jurisdiction, to sell another permit to the small businessman who to serve our tourists and hunters, will have to give up the sale of ammunition needed by some hunters, if they want to avoid paying more than they get from this sale. I think it would be appropriate for the government, even though the amendment is passed, to withdraw this bill immediately so that it can be considered even more carefully. Unfortunately, government members are looking forward to going home like many honourable members, and they introduced once more this legislation in a hurry, so that it can be passed as soon as possible.

● (1730)

[*English*]

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North): Mr. Speaker, I have not participated to any extent in this debate up to this time. One of the reasons for my sitting back was the

[Mr. Caouette (Villeneuve).]

fact that the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) gave this party tremendous leadership in the area of Bill C-51.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Coates: The hon. member for Calgary North was very willing to co-operate with the government in every possible way to produce a more realistic proposal which, if he had been listened to, would have seen this House give unanimous consent to the passage of the legislation. As it is now, without the many amendments which were put forward by the hon. member for Calgary North, we find ourselves in a position where we have bad legislation which I cannot support. I am sure most members cannot support it if they take the time to think about it, both in regard to gun control and wiretapping.

Even at this late date the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) is not wise enough to accept the good advice which has been given both in committee and in this House by the hon. member for Calgary North, the effect of which would produce legislation that would be acceptable to all Canadian people. What we have is a bad bill that the government has been unwilling to move on. Unfortunately other things have come into this debate which are most unpalatable to me and to most of the members of this House.

The only other time I spoke in regard to this bill in the House was when I rose because of some reprehensible remarks made by the Minister of Justice outside this Chamber in relation to the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers), the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil), the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Brisco), the hon. member for Palliser (Mr. Schumacher), and the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Ritchie). These remarks were completely unparliamentary, as far as I was concerned, and should have been removed from the record by the Minister of Justice. He still has an opportunity to do that at this late date. He reflected on the good reputations of those individual members of parliament.

The remarks of the Minister of Justice should not stand in relation to these particular members, as they were endeavouring to give the best wisdom they had in relation to this legislation. In regard to those five individual members of parliament the record will show, upon examination, that they voted for the retention of capital punishment, which is the greatest possible deterrent available to government to enforce law and order in this country. It should continue to be a deterrent for all time to come.

If the government is interested in trying to bring some sanity into an insane situation, as far as enforcing laws upon the people of this nation is concerned, it will have to bring in another amendment to the Criminal Code placing on the statute books the retention of capital punishment for capital murder. That would do more than all the regulations associated with gun control implemented at any time.

Legal wiretapping from this moment forward will become a total joke. With this legislation, police officers are told that they can illegally wiretap and then introduce the evidence they secure into a particular trial. Why would any police officer want to bother going through the formality of getting author-