

Gun Control

they say they are, they will stand up in committee. If they are no good, they will not, and logic will prevail.

Mr. Bill Vankoughnet (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to rise to speak in the House on Bill C-451 on gun control. It is not only of concern to my constituency but of concern to people all across this country.

I want to congratulate my colleagues for being here in the House today, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine (Mr. McKenzie), the Hon. Member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil), the Hon. Member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers), the Hon. Member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Corbett), the Hon. Member for Victoria-Haliburton (Mr. Scott), the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor), the Hon. Member for Edmonton North (Mr. Paproski), the Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker), I can go on and on. I congratulate the Hon. Member for Malpeque (Mr. Gass), the Hon. Member for Prince George-Peace River (Mr. Oberle), the Hon. Member for Okanagan North (Mr. Dantzer), the Hon. Member for Kindersley-Lloydminster (Mr. McKnight), the Hon. Member for Prince George-Bulkley Valley (Mr. McCuish), the Hon. Member for Huron-Bruce (Mr. Cardiff), the Hon. Member for Cariboo-Chilcotin (Mr. Greenaway), the Hon. Member for Grey-Simcoe (Mr. Mitges), the Hon. Member for Perth (Mr. Jarvis), the Hon. Member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson), and so on. These people are very concerned—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) rises on a point of order.

Mr. Fulton: I only want to stop the Hon. Member for a moment. I want to hear what he has to say, but I do not think he should name Members who are not in their seats. He has named at least three who are not.

Mr. Vankoughnet: That is not a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I really believe that these people are here in the lobby. They are in and out. They have stayed here specifically this afternoon to protest this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Vankoughnet: I have listened to the former solicitor general's comments, and I can say with certainty that Canadians do not believe the former solicitor general when he states the "purpose" of his private Member's Bill. I ask the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East (Mr. Allmand), what is the hidden agenda of his Party? This Bill suggests police state tactics which are foreign to Canada and Canadians. This Bill attacks the right to own private property, penalizes law-abiding citizens, gives the police powers which are not necessary, and does not address the real problem, which is the misuse of firearms. If the former solicitor general wants to implement a deterrent to criminals, he should be introducing a private Member's Bill which has tougher laws against those who misuse firearms, not against law-abiding citizens. If he is really serious about the intent of his Bill, he should urge his Party to reintroduce capital punishment, which

is a more meaningful deterrent than the increased harassment he now proposes.

I am particularly pleased, Mr. Speaker, to be able to speak to this Private Member's Bill when I think back to a Friday earlier this year, on July 9, when a Private Member's Bill was introduced in this Chamber at four o'clock which changed the name of our July 1 holiday. This was done in an underhanded manner. No way will this Bill be allowed to go any further. On this side of the House, Friday is a difficult day on which to be in attendance, because, unlike Members of the Liberal Party which is centred in Central Canada, my colleagues have had to travel far because of their representations in the vast areas of this country. They cannot be here. I would like to mention, particularly, the Hon. Member for York North (Mr. Gamble), the Hon. Member for Okanagan-Similkameen (Mr. King), and the Hon. Member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave). They would have liked to take part in this debate, but due to previous commitments they could not be in the House this afternoon.

I have stated publicly previously, and still believe, that Bill C-451 is a trial balloon to test public reaction. We have a former solicitor general sponsoring this Private Member's Bill. He is the same individual who introduced the original Bill C-51. I was heartened to hear the present Solicitor General of Canada (Mr. Kaplan) make the following comment publicly here in the House as well as in the press: "I would like to make it very clear that Mr. Allmand's Bill is not a Government Bill, and the position of the Government has not changed in that there will be no substantive amendments to the current legislation until after the review". The Solicitor General also stated that his review would be available in late 1982 or early 1983. Is Bill C-451 a preview of that report, depending on current public reaction? And will the Solicitor General withdraw any recommendations in that report which allude to the substance of Bill C-451?

Guns used by the professional criminal element will always be acquired, and no amount of gun control will ever control that. If the intent is to control the illegal use of guns, look to the courts, our laws and the complete disregard of justice. Today a murderer can expect a few years in jail. Mandatory supervision sees to it that he is back out on the street quickly. The murderer can try again because he knows he will not spend a long time in jail. There are no complaints from previous victims because they have been buried. Capital punishment is a deterrent.

It is clear that we have had a form of gun control in this country for years. Handguns have been restricted since the 1930s. As well, restrictions on automatic weapons are certainly necessary. We can all agree on that. Bill C-451 will only serve to harass those law-abiding citizens who use hunting and sporting rifles for peaceful purposes.

● (1630)

The new Constitution, which the Progressive Conservatives fought so hard to make humanistic, does not contain the right