

and not technocrats or civil servants who will eventually have to deal with this legislation, who acquired the experience in sociology inspired by marxist papers in favour of greater freedom for criminals. And I would like here to quote, for example, from remarks by—

[English]

—Chief Inspector Colin Greenwood of the West Yorkshire Constabulary, England. He said:

Fifty years of gun control have been useless in stemming the tide of gun related crime. Since 1963 the rate of armed crime in England has risen a staggering 400 per cent. ...

Guns were always available to any criminal who chose to use them. Firearms controls do not appear to have stopped this class of criminal from obtaining a gun when he thought he could use one ...

The odds against him being caught may be something like seven or ten to one in his favour. When the death penalty is applied, he is not prepared to accept seven or ten to one odds on a chance of being hanged. Capital punishment and violent crime seem to be tied together in some form. ...

No matter how one approaches the figures, one is forced to the rather startling conclusion that the use of firearms in crime was very much less than when there were no controls of any sort and when anyone, convicted criminal or lunatic, could buy any type of firearms without restriction.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I believe in submissions from experienced individuals but not from people who spent years in schools and do not have the knowledge of our policemen responsible for protecting mostly honest Canadians. And as representative of a constituency of this extensive country I think that our first responsibility is to protect the great majority of honest people who make up our Canadian society. It is not with a greater liberalization that we will control criminals, obtain more respect for our country and our property because the country would be left at the mercy of extremists and revolutionists as elsewhere in the world.

This occurred elsewhere, Mr. Speaker, when firearms were registered. In all the countries of the world where firearms were registered, 25 years afterwards, they were seized and the honest people were left at the mercy of idiots, lunatics and criminals.

[English]

Mr. Norman A. Cafik (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to be able to address myself to Bill C-83. My intention primarily in the debate today is to talk specifically about the gun control aspects of this legislation. I do not intend to deal with equally significant and important aspects of the bill at this time which touch upon crime inquiries, detection and electronic surveillance, dangerous offenders, habitual criminals, and strengthening measures to ensure adequate custody and safer techniques for the release of inmates, and other broad questions of crime prevention.

● (1730)

The gun control aspect of this bill has provoked an enormous amount of controversy in society and I feel that at this stage of the debate, in view of the limitation of time, I would prefer to deal specifically with this particular aspect of the legislation.

The first point I want to make is more a semantic one, a matter of window dressing. Bill C-83 on its front page calls

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the legislation "An Act to provide for the better protection of Canadian society against perpetrators of violent and other crime". It seems to me that that description of the contents of the bill is very offensive to those who are law-abiding citizens and who are about to be controlled in terms of their use of firearms. It would seem to me much better to refer to the bill along the following lines: "An Act to amend the Criminal Code through (1), provisions for the better protection of Canadian society against perpetrators of violent and other crime, and (2), provisions to control the use of firearms in Canada." That at least would not carry with it the implication that the control of firearms was directly related to the perpetrators of violent and other crime in Canada. I think this has created a rather unhealthy approach to the matter on the part of those who feel legitimately aggrieved by some of the provisions in Bill C-83.

The next point I would make has to do with the use of time allocation, in other words, House rule 75C, to limit second reading debate. As all members know, we have had some days now on second reading, but this allocation of time, limiting further debate to four days, is something I basically support providing it is the mechanism that will bring the matter before the committee where the public and those who have real need for input will be given a longer period of time to make their views known.

In the debate which took place on the use of Standing Order 75C, opposition members drew the attention of the House to the fact that there were no guarantees given that there would be adequate time in Committee. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford), whose speech I listened to in the debate, indicated that this was one of the motivating forces behind the allocation of time. I certainly hope that the House, and particularly the committee at committee stage, will give adequate time to allow the citizens of this country and groups concerned with the various aspects of the bill opportunity to make a meaningful input, and that the committee itself will very carefully consider the representations that have been made and will be made.

I think all hon. members know—certainly I do as a result of my experience in the House since 1968—that whenever parliament tries to amend the Criminal Code it evokes a great deal of controversy. The gun control aspects of this bill have generated a great deal of debate with the public and an enormous amount of heat and, I think, emotion. The members of the committee in particular must listen very carefully to the views expressed by Canadians on this important subject. They must not reject criticism of the bill simply because it is expressed with emotion and passion. They must listen to all arguments and address themselves to the legitimate points that are being expressed in many instances. In this way both committee and the House will be able to make amendments and improve the legislation that is before us.

To illustrate the kind of views that exist in the community, I have received a great deal of correspondence and had a number of meetings with my constituents on this subject. I want to quote briefly from one group that wrote to me representing the Cannington Gun Club just outside my riding, in Cannington, Ontario. It is a rather lengthy letter so I shall just quote a couple of excerpts from it: