

Can the Prime Minister promise, and this is a serious matter, that the measures in the upcoming budget will not constitute an outright offloading of the government's responsibilities on the backs of the provinces? This is walking away from responsibility. It is not decentralization.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every day, the hon. member rises in the House to ask us to cut spending. If we cut spending, we cut. If he tells us to cut spending and transfer the money, we are back to square one. We are going to cut a lot of spending and we are going to try to achieve our objectives, and we will. We will do what it takes.

Discussions are being held with the provinces. We will try to reach an agreement the best way we can. Yesterday, Premier Wells said: stop sending us money for our forests. I am not going to argue with Mr. Wells. If he does not want money for his forests, we will not send him any.

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[English]

#### GUN CONTROL

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, under the justice minister's gun control legislation tabled earlier today hundreds of thousands of firearms legally acquired by law-abiding citizens will now be effectively confiscated.

How does the minister justify his government's confiscation of private property?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question is fundamentally flawed. There is nothing in the bill that confiscates firearms.

The bill is intended to enhance criminal sanctions, to crack down on the criminal misuse of guns and to achieve the sort of control any reasonable society wants to ensure public safety.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I contend that the justice minister's plan is fundamentally flawed. Under his plan these individuals will only be allowed to transfer their guns to the crown, to the police or to a few authorized businesses that are licensed to acquire prohibited firearms.

Could the justice minister tell the thousands of responsible gun owners who now own these guns if they are going to get a fair price, considering he has drastically reduced the market?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the first instance I am proud to say that the government has introduced today legislation that will be easily accepted by the vast majority of Canadians.

#### Oral Questions

May I observe as well that the centre point of the plan that involves registration of all firearms has recently been reported to have the support of two out of three Albertans among others.

Last, may I draw the hon. member's attention to the bill we tabled today that makes clear those who own and possess prohibited firearms may continue to buy and sell among their own class so that their investment in those firearms is preserved.

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• (1430)

[Translation]

#### GUN CONTROL

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

In her report on her investigation of firearms, coroner Anne-Marie David recommends to the Minister of Justice that shipments of arms stored and transported by importers be covered by specific legislation.

In view of the fact that, in Quebec alone, 1,502 imported revolvers and pistols were reported stolen in 1992 and 1993, how can the Minister of Justice claim to be tabling a bill that responds to needs, when he ignored the recommendation of coroner Anne-Marie David?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed in the hon. member's attitude toward this bill. On November 30, when we tabled our program, she found fault with it because we had no bill. Now that we have a bill, the hon. member is still not offering any constructive criticism. The hon. member knows full well that most Canadians, and Quebecers in particular, support these proposals.

[English]

I would suggest that if the hon. member has suggestions to make in committee to improve the bill that she do so, but that she stand today in this House with the majority of Canadians in favour of this bill instead of making individual criticisms when overall it meets the safety needs of Canadians.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, given the official opposition's criticism when his plan of action was unveiled in December, does the Minister of Justice still plan to allow the owners of the 13,000 automatic weapons registered in Canada, including 4,000 AK-47s, to keep them legally for the rest of their lives?

[English]

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, according to the bill that was tabled today, all such paramilitary weapons will be prohibited.