

Canadians expect us to vote on the merits of the bill. I want to emphasize I do not have any reservations about gun registration as a policy. However I cannot support the bill because I believe it is fundamentally flawed. It does not advance the cause of justice or the safety of the citizens one iota.

I cannot support the bill because it diverts scarce public resources and energies to policies which will not truly enhance personal and community safety. Members cannot transfer support for gun registration to Bill C-68.

There is another side of the issue I would also like to address. Why has the government not devoted its energies and resources to measures that will truly lead to safer communities? Consider the tragic case of Christopher Stevenson. Members may recall Christopher was an 11-year old Ontario boy who was raped and murdered by a psychopathic pedophile and a nine-time child rapist, Joseph Fredericks.

Recently Dr. Jim Cairns who headed the inquest into Christopher's death warned that our children remain targets of dangerous sexual predators because governments are not moving in a meaningful way to protect them. The evidence presented at the inquest was that these offenders cannot be treated and the only way to protect society is through indefinite detention. Yet the principal recommendation of the Stevenson inquiry that repeat child sex offenders be jailed indefinitely has not been implemented.

• (1700)

Why has the government not enacted sexual predator legislation which puts the rights of the victim and the protection of society above all else? Why has the government diverted energies and resources of the Department of Justice and the House from addressing real solutions to the problem of violence in our homes and neighbourhoods?

These are the real questions. These are the questions members opposite must answer. These are the questions to which Canadians want answers.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Waterloo—National Defence.

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not claim to be an expert on hunting and guns but I know the hon. member for Delta may be of some assistance. How can his party justify not supporting the bill?

I will put it in terms of what I understand from hunting. I have seen a hunting expedition. I saw the hunters arrive in their vehicles in northern Canada, in the Northwest Territories. They were in licensed vehicles. Presumably they had stopped at licensed gas stations along the way to pick up gas. They got on a licensed aircraft on a licensed airfield and flew to some remote lake where they hunted. They had to have a hunting licence in

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order to hunt. I presume the licence was specific as to the species of animal they were able to hunt.

They got the animal. They then applied for a licence to export the horns from the Northwest Territories because they could not export from the Northwest Territories without a licence. They got back in their licensed vehicle, having travelled with a licensed guide on their hunting trip.

If everything else about the sport is licensed except the most dangerous part of it, that is the gun, why is there objection to proceeding with the licensing of guns? There is no objection to licensing game wardens. There is no problem with getting a licence to hunt. There is no problem with licensing the guides, the aircraft, the cars, the gas station and everything else. Yet Reform members have a mental block with respect to licensing guns. Could the hon. member enlighten me? I cannot understand this attitude.

**Mr. Cummins:** Mr. Speaker, the issue of licensing put quite simply is that if I have a car that is not used on the highway I do not need to register it. If I am not using the vehicle registration is not required. That applies to many elements in society.

The issue is not about licensing. The issue is about public safety. The gun handler is licensed. The legislation requires a very stringent test and personal interventions by police authorities to ensure that the person can adequately operate the weapon and so on. We have given very careful consideration to dealing with the issue of licensing.

However the issue is not licensing; the issue is public safety. We are opposed to the bill because licensing will not advance the cause of public safety one iota.

**Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the hon. member's speech when he talked about licensing. Yesterday I talked about the importance of representing one's constituents here. As I did so members of the Reform Party kept yelling at me and telling me that somehow I was not representing my constituents by making a decision to vote in favour of the bill.

**An hon. member:** We all know that you will do what you are told.

**Mr. Speller:** Do what I am told? Look at the hon. members who are falling in line with their leader.

Their leader lives in an urban area that is in favour of the legislation. All the polls that have been taken across the country have clearly shown that. How can the hon. member and members of his caucus stand here to say that those of us in Ontario, for instance, who are trying to best represent our constituents, who have taken polls and have spoken to many constituents, are not representing our constituents? His own leader comes from an area of the country where polls have shown that the majority of the people are in favour of the legislation. His leader is going to vote against it, against the wishes of his constituents. That party's key point during the election campaign was to represent