

no doubt a day or two afterwards we shall read in the newspapers that young people have lost their lives, their sight or their limbs as a result of firecracker explosions and burns. Complaints and representations will be made by parents and others in all parts of the country, followed, no doubt, by undertakings that the authorities will take certain action, but no total prohibition is likely to result. The bill before us will impose some measure of control over firecrackers. The hon. member for Central Nova suggested that a group of Kiwanis might be prohibited from holding a display of firecrackers. I hope such a day will never come. We have learned from experience that firecrackers, to be safe, must be placed in the hands of responsible people. I should like to read a letter which has been received by my hon. friend from Oshawa-Whitby on this subject.

Dear Mr. Broadbent:

The members of the Duke of Edinburgh Home and School Association of Oshawa asked me to write you to ask that you support us in the following proposal: That firecrackers be banned in Canada.

We understand that the Explosives Act is now in the House of Commons for amendment. Perhaps this request is too late for this year, but we would like action started now so that by next year this problem will not exist.

We are not asking that all fireworks be banned, just the ten cents package kind that have no display value. These kind are easily attained by children and are the cause of 95 per cent of all firecracker burns.

Three provinces have banned them already. Could Ontario be next? Eventually Canada!

All fireworks are imported so it wouldn't be a hardship for any Canadian maker.

Mrs. Margaret McBurney, a Toronto mother, whose son was injured by firecrackers last year, has started this movement. She is now being supported by several other associations. The Home and School Association in this area would like to add their wholehearted support. We are in the process now of getting support from Ontario County Council of Home and School and eventually support from the province of Ontario.

We feel certain that this is a worthy cause. There are statistics available through the Ontario Safety League. We would be glad to send you further information if desired.

May we ask that you voice an opinion on our behalf when the Explosives Act is read again?

Sincerely,

Mrs. Mary Turpin, Vice-President,
Duke of Edinburgh Home and School Association

I believe the contents of this letter should be studied carefully and that action should, perhaps, be taken along the lines suggested. It would be difficult, I suppose, simply to ban firecrackers of the "ten cent package kind". We should probably need to legislate with respect to firecrackers in general and, perhaps, to adopt regulations controlling the manufacture of certain types, more especially, defining who may buy them, who may sell them and who may use them.

These are some of the approaches I should like to see taken in connection with the bill before us. I have a certain confidence that the minister who has introduced the measure will show qualities of maturity and wisdom, that he will retain the principle of the bill while accommodating some of the suggestions which have been put forward by hon. members who have spoken against the legislation.

Explosives Act

Mr. Mac T. McCutcheon (Lambton-Kent): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the bill seems to be fairly stated in the explanatory note, namely, to ensure stricter control over the use of explosives. Presumably the need for greater control is justified on the grounds that private citizens have made increased use of explosives in order to carry out anti-social acts at the political or at the criminal level. With this concept I agree wholeheartedly. I support the principle thus outlined.

I have some few reservations, and I hope to put them on record in the time remaining to me. It can be said that Bill C-7 is designed to achieve its purpose by tightening up and extending the control presently exercised by the federal government over explosives within the area already occupied by the central administration. In addition, it appears that controls are extended into an area which, in my opinion, has been considered one which was subject to provincial legislation. A further aspect to be considered is the possibility of interference with personal liberty. Such interference can be considered upon two levels, interference at the regulatory stage and interference at the prosecution stage.

• (1750)

In this connection, as I read the act it would appear to be capable of some abuse. In respect of our regulatory control of explosives, the most important is the new power given to the governor in council to make regulations respecting the purchase and possession of explosives. With the present power over sale, these additions would give the governor in council complete power and control over explosives in the hands of the seller, the buyer and the possessor. In the old act, and extended in this legislation, there are provisions covering manufacturing, testing, storage and importation. This proposed regulatory power is matched by a proposed new offence. Clause 3 Section 5 is to be amended as follows:

Except as authorized under this Act and subject to such exemptions as may be provided by regulation, no person shall

(d) have in his possession any explosive;

Mr. Speaker: I have to interrupt the hon. member. I try to give as much leeway as possible in considering this bill, but I must remind hon. members that when they make statements in connection with the bill the rules do not permit a detailed consideration of the individual clauses of the bill. I hope the hon. member, as much as possible, will limit his contribution to the general intent, purport and principle of the bill.

Mr. McCutcheon: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and apologize for mentioning a section of the bill. I did it merely to point out the provision that no person shall have in his possession any explosive. This in my opinion is a typical example of bureaucratic over-kill. Very few criminal offences have been caused in this country by registered firearms or properly and legally purchased explosives. So I say we should not crucify the respectable sportsman, the buff who collects guns and the people who engage in skeet and trap shooting. Many of these people load their own shells. They do so because they are able to make a more precise load at probably a third of the normal cost. I suggest that a close surveillance of explosives in the hands of construction people, and in the hands of people