

*Criminal Code*

ever, I am not saying that no improvement is necessary. Legislation can always be improved, but this requires a comprehensive examination of the legislation itself or the related program and consultations with the provinces and those most directly affected.

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about the existing legislation, and particularly about the firearms acquisition certificate. This system was established in 1975 and requires that all those who want to purchase a firearm first be issued a firearms acquisition certificate. As of the end of last September, one million certificates had been issued.

When these provisions were adopted, the Government had promised that an independent agency would be asked to evaluate the firearms control program for three years. Two preliminary reports were submitted and the final report was tabled in August 1983. Afterwards, the public was invited to comment on both the evaluation and the program itself.

The Canadian public unanimously objected to additional gun control measures. Canadians believe that the existing measures are adequate and that nothing would justify stricter controls. Many have however requested that the provisions on the use of firearms for illegal purposes be much more rigorously enforced.

Those who commented on the firearms acquisition certificates believed that these certificates represent no infringement on individual freedoms and seem to meet their purpose, namely to reduce armed violence and prevent dangerous individuals from obtaining firearms.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Canadians have accepted the principle of firearms acquisition certificates. I do not believe that they would agree with the proposal made today. As legislators, we have to guarantee that Canada has adequate, and most important, reasonable legislation to control firearms in general. In my opinion, the proposals made by the Hon. Member are unreasonable in addition to being rather controversial, and I believe that it would be a mistake to support them.

[English]

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill C-205, which has been tabled by the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East (Mr. Allmand). In fact, I seconded the particular Bill. However, in doing so, I want to emphasize that this hour is Private Members' Hour. In supporting this Private Member's Bill today, I am speaking in my capacity as a private Member of the House. I am not speaking on behalf of my caucus or on behalf of my Party. I am speaking as one Member of the House.

In doing so, and in speaking in support of the legislation, I know that a number of my caucus colleagues take the opposite point of view, particularly some of them from rural communities, such as the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy),

the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) and the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton), who take a position in opposition to the legislation. Indeed, the Hon. Member for Skeena has himself tabled a Private Member's Bill which would eliminate the search and seizure provisions of existing gun control legislation and would eliminate the firearms acquisition certificate in rural areas of Canada. It is obvious, even within caucuses, that there are differences of opinion on this very important question.

However, I am pleased to rise today in support of the principles of the Bill tabled by the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East. As well, I want to take this opportunity to commend the Hon. Member for having in fact pioneered the original gun control legislation in the country. In 1976, the Hon. Member, who was then the Solicitor General of Canada, introduced Bill C-83. That Bill in fact contained principles in respect of firearms acquisition certificates which would have applied to all those who possess long guns, not just those who purchase new guns. That Bill died on the Order Paper when the session ended. The Bill which followed, also introduced by the then Solicitor General, the Hon. Member for Notre-de-Grâce-Lachine East, had in fact been watered down, to the extent that the firearms acquisition certificate licensing proposal only applied to the acquisition of new guns.

● (1800)

The purpose of this Private Member's Bill which I support is to restore the original provisions of the gun control legislation as tabled in 1976. That means that it would not just be those who have purchased guns since January 1, 1978, who would be required to have firearms acquisition certificates but it would provide that all those who wish to possess long guns, namely rifles and shotguns, must possess a firearms possession certificate.

The other change that this Private Member's Bill would implement is to ensure that, although one has to produce a firearms possession certificate when one buys a gun, one would also have to produce it whenever one buys ammunition for that gun. I think that that is a reasonable proposition and one which I support as well.

The fundamental purpose of this Bill is quite straightforward. It is to ensure that all of those who possess these lethal weapons which are manufactured, after all, to kill either animals or human beings, should possess a firearms acquisition certificate and a firearms possession certificate under the terms of this Bill.

The Bill does not in any way affect those who are responsible, law-abiding hunters, sportsmen and sportswomen and those who use guns in competition. Certainly Canada has had some outstanding competitors at the olympic level in the area of competitive shooting. This Bill does not affect them nor does it affect hunters who would, I am sure, readily qualify for these certificates and who, I would think, would be supportive of this principle.

As well, the Bill would respond to some of the concerns which have been raised by those who argue that the present