

On various occasions the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has shown his contempt for parliament, and nowhere is it better illustrated than with the abuse of orders in council. In 1976, Mr. Speaker, there were 3,327 orders in council passed and none of them was later brought before parliament for discussion. For the same time period there were only ten orders in council in England, all of them later introduced into parliament for approval. That is a clear indication of the decline of parliament in Canada. It has been proven without a shadow of doubt that certain elements in the federal bureaucracy have used orders in council and regulations for their own convenience, without regard to public rights. The second report of the Joint Standing Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments contains carefully documented proof that Canada's parliament is being seriously weakened by orders in council.

Since this issue was first raised in parliament over 12 years ago, Mr. Speaker, parliament has been frustrated and inhibited by these abuses. In blunt terms, the Trudeau government has helped parliamentary democracy turn into an order in council dictatorship, with power firmly fixed in the hands of the executive. If we are to make a serious move to restore the right of parliament as a meaningful body to defend the rights of the public against imperial prime ministership, then we should pass the amendment moved by the hon. member for Calgary North. As we all know, an order in council can seriously alter the law within days. Since the vast majority of Canadians are not aware of these changes, it makes common sense that all regulations should be brought back to parliament within 15 days and debated. In that way the people of this country would have a better opportunity of knowing exactly what is going on.

With regard to gun control, Mr. Speaker, you will note that Bill C-51 proposes that new laws be put into effect by order in council. When you look at Bill C-51, it is surprising how vague it is with regard to gun control. Gun control should be aimed at the criminal element; but Bill C-51 could make criminals out of many responsible gun owners in Canada. In a short time, gun dealers, gun owners and even the police are not going to know which guns are restricted. That is a concern which many of my constituents, and indeed responsible gun owners from all over Canada, have been writing about to all members and especially to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford).

● (1540)

I seriously wonder why the government is so reluctant to draft these regulations and present them to parliament for approval. Why must they be forced on Canadians? Parliament should make laws for Canadians, and not bureaucrats. Gun control is supposed to be aimed at those who deliberately are out to break the law. Bill C-51 is on its way to making criminals out of law-abiding Canadians who will suddenly find themselves in possession of illegal weapons because they do not read the *Canada Gazette* and since this government has no intention of bringing these matters before parliament.

### *Criminal Code*

To govern is a trust and, like any trust, there must be an accounting. The bureaucrats who will draft the gun control regulations are not accountable to the people. Unless there is a serious change, we shall see the advent of government by regulation at the whim of a handful of people. I should like to quote from a couple of letters I received from Winnipeg residents with regard to Bill C-51. A young man who has never written to an elected member before summed up the feelings of many by writing the following:

Bill C-51 would make many voters feel like second-class citizens and a bit like a criminal because of their sport and hobby.

Yes, responsible gun owners are being hindered by this bill. They are very concerned about the intent of the bill. Another Winnipeg constituent wrote the following:

Another unacceptable provision of this legislation is that it gives the governor in council power to formulate law without reference to parliament, in other words, this is open-ended legislation which could be used by individuals in power in government for many purposes completely unacceptable in our society.

Many law-abiding gun owners want to know what the purpose of using regulations through orders in council is all about. The Manitoba Association of Gun Owners stated the following:

At the present time Bill C-51 appears to be aimed at depriving and restricting the honest law-abiding citizens of their right to enjoy legitimate ownership and use of firearms.

I contend that the time has come for the government to come clean with the Canadian people and to cease government by regulation. The motion presented by my colleague, the hon. member for Calgary North, would be a step in the right direction. It was interesting to note this afternoon during the question period that the Prime Minister was concerned about when the House was going to recess. We will not be able to recess for some period of time. The Minister of Justice must be going through a very uncomfortable period when he goes home each evening and his children ask him, "Daddy, when are we going to go back to Vancouver? I would like to have a swim at Kitsilano beach". Maybe the minister's wife and his children will have some effect on him, in which case we can all have a holiday this summer.

I should like to quote from a letter I received from Mr. L. Martynec, president of the Association of Automatic Firearms Collectors and Shooters, which outlines the concern they have. Today I received approximately 150 letters from my riding. I am here to speak up for Canadian people when they are concerned about pieces of legislation like this. Returning to Mr. Martynec's letter, it reads as follows:

We decry the injustice of medieval witch-hunts and persecution of "heretics", yet the same principle applies in this case. Unwillingness to understand or tolerate the innocent and lawful activities of others is typical of the dark ages and should have no place in our enlightened and just society.

I am therefore appealing to you, as a Canadian legislator, to give this issue judicious consideration and at the same time urge you to do everything in your power not to allow such wanton mistreatment of innocent human beings. I sincerely hope that as a result, you will influence adoption of amendments to Bill C-51 to reflect justice and common sense, thus allowing legitimate, law-abiding owners of automatic firearms to continue enjoying their innocent and harmless activity without further unnecessary harassment.