

some of the people who hunt and some of the people who deal in guns a lot agree that there is a great deal in this bill that should receive complete agreement across this country.

The fact that there should be firearms acquisition certificates is agreed to by all groups, even the supporters of changes to this bill who want to have a more widespread utilization and not as much control of the use of firearms. They agree that this is a good thing.

In fact, gun clubs have been advocating these kinds of courses for years. When the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce was in cabinet actually advocated—it is there, it is passed—that firearms acquisition certificates be issued only after a course or an exam.

It has been there. It just has not received Royal Assent. It has never been brought in. All we need to do is to give Royal Assent to that particular provision. It has not been done.

There is also the fact that the firearms acquisition certificates should be preceded by a course or a certified examination. No one disagrees with the minister on that. In fact, everyone agrees that a certificate should have a picture of the person who is licensed on the certificate. There is no disagreement with that whatsoever.

There is no disagreement that a waiting period should exist for the period from the time that the person applies for a firearms acquisition certification until the time the certificate is actually granted.

The minister, in the legislation, recommends 28 days. Maybe it is 28 days. All people who are gun proponents say is: "If it is 28 days, be absolutely sure that you are going to use the 28 days and that you are not just taking an arbitrary figure." A very reasonable request.

I think that is something that will have to be studied and I think perhaps we could fine tune that in a legislative committee, or as the minister suggests, in a special committee.

There is also general agreement that before the certificate be issued, there should also be an inspection of the storage facilities where the guns are going to be located. A very realistic request.

Government Orders

This is advocated by people who are gun users and are hunters. They realize that these safety requirements are very important. In this country, there are approximately 1,400 deaths by firearms a year.

• (1250)

Of the 1,400, 1,100 are suicides. Approximately 15 per cent of deaths by firearms are actually homicides. The fact that we have a safe place to store guns is very important. It may not mean a lot to some people, but when you look at that statistic, it is very important.

I agree with the minister that our gun control legislation in the past has been helpful because only 15 per cent of our deaths by arms are homicides. It shows that the gun control legislation in the past has been working.

I also agree with the minister that it is time for some changes in this because things have changed dramatically in the last couple of years. For example, in 1989, in one year the total number of violent crimes among adults increased by 7.9 per cent. Among young people, the violent crimes in this country from 1988 to 1989 increased 20 per cent, for an average nationally of 9.3 per cent. That is a significant increase and not a very good indication of where we are going as regard to our attitude toward violence in this country.

This is why we have, particularly with the young people, to be able to deal with this question, to look at treatment. We have to spend money on that. There is no question about that. I ask the minister to come before the committee on Bill C-58 and to discuss this question because it is very important if we are to deal with the whole question of violence in this country.

We are not going to outlaw guns. It is not even feasible to consider that. There are six million guns in Canada, and there are approximately 10,000 outlets where guns are sold, so guns are going to remain.

What we want to do is have a law which will serve the country in the best possible way, taking into consideration people who would abuse gun laws and commit crimes. We must also take into consideration those who use guns for sport and recreation, and who pose no threat, but who through their common sense and stability have actually increased the awareness of good gun control and good gun usage in this country.