

use of handguns today. I say "because of my ignorance" because I do not really know anything about the subject. I am always concerned when I see a pailful of weights in my garage taken from cars and which my son has collected to make bullets. I know he will be using a lot of powder and youngsters are always pushing guns to their limit. Anything we do to restrict the legitimate, reasonable and orderly sale of ammunition I suggest will further the market for reloading cartridges to push a gun beyond the safety factor.

Manufacturers of shells have their own equipment to test the maximum explosive effect a given gun can withstand. The homeloader makes this test by trial and error, and when he exceeds the maximum the error may be a costly one. So, let us not bow to those who talk about law and order without thinking just what law and order may entail. Let us not complicate a simple act that seeks to regulate the use of explosives for legitimate purposes by putting in all this junk to which the minister has referred. I suggest we leave the act as it was, and that safety cartridges be excluded from its provisions. I also suggest we exclude flares and some of the more harmless fireworks. I was not badly brought up but my mother and father let me play with five cent firecrackers or sparklers on certain occasions, and I do not think it hurt me. We would be taking away some of the joys of being young were we to prohibit young folk from playing with fireworks simply because they could be dangerous in extreme cases.

Is the minister going to say that under this act and regulations no one under the age of 15 is allowed to buy firecracker devices, or is he going to say that those who go to great expense to buy the necessary equipment to maintain explosives in top shape are to come within the act? One of the problems created in provinces where it is not mandatory to keep explosives in proper shape is that when the dynamite deteriorates, or the glycerine inside the cartridge exudes to the surface, it becomes highly dangerous. As a result, these cartridges should be properly disposed of. I am sure some of the dynamite used by the FLQ was dynamite discarded by quarry companies as unfit for use. Nevertheless, in its deteriorated state it can be highly effective when used for other purposes. Therefore, I am glad the minister is tightening up the provisions regarding the disposal of explosives obtained legitimately.

I shall be interested to hear from the officials about particular abuses which have taken place and to what extent they intend the act to go. Without this information I will not be able to support the legislation, for the simple reason that I know that it will lend itself to a multitude of abuses. Law and order officers will try to eliminate use of guns in Canada by placing restrictions on the sale of ammunition. This will mean each little service station and country store in my area, many of them 50 or 75 miles from any municipality, will be prohibited from carrying on its shelves ammunition for use by hunters in the area. These restrictions will be enforced by zealous, stupid people—most of the law and order officers fit into that category—who do not face a problem but try to solve it by subterfuge, and this usually creates more problems than it solves.

### *Explosives Act*

I am very much in favour of the changes that have been made in the provisions governing the use of explosives. My only objection is to the use of this bill for an ulterior purpose, one that lends itself to great discrimination against 75 per cent of the people in this country who on occasion like to go hunting for pleasure and for game.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Matte (Champlain):** Mr. Speaker, the bill before us is intended to give citizens and society more protection against the hazards inherent in explosives. However, if we analyse the reasons which prompted the government to introduce such legislation, I think it in order to question some clauses of this bill; although they put much more teeth in the present act and make the use of explosives much stricter, they might not in fact make it all that much easier to reach our objective.

I agree almost completely with the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) on the points on which he dwelled in his speech, Mr. Speaker, for it is not indeed by being more stringent about the manufacture and the use of explosives that a social problem will be solved.

That some individuals totally lacking in human decency should have used explosives for unavowable or extremely wicked purposes must not make us lose our senses and pass laws that are so strict that finally, those who would normally benefit from their advantages might really become their victims.

I should like to stress a few specific points. It is true, as the member for Timiskaming pointed out, that the reforms proposed by the bill might lead to endless abuse. I may be told that regulations to be set up will decrease or remove those abuses.

Mr. Speaker, we have already had striking examples. May I mention one related to the infamous events of October 1970 in Quebec where, through the War Measures Act, efforts were made to arrest a handful of people, about ten at the most. The act that was applied was far too strict, all out of proportion to the objective, and I wonder if the changes proposed here might not lead to similar abuse.

Some 500 or 600 persons were arrested under the War Measures Act, for absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker, thus denying the freedom of thousands of individuals because of an act that was too strict, too severe, too specific.

In this case, the object is indeed extremely worthy: to keep shady characters, commonly known as terrorists, from having easy access to explosives. We are all aware, Mr. Speaker, that we must not make things too easy for that type of bandits who could spread terror in the land if getting explosives is a cinch.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is well known that it is not through stricter administration of the law for the majority of people, that this kind of persons will be rehabilitated. All sorts of laws can be enacted to prohibit thefts, but we know that thefts are constantly on the increase. I would even suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the stricter the laws and the more they infringe on personal freedom, the more provocative and explosive they will tend to be.