

expressed. I hear the minister say that that was done. I do not know whether he means that the question of constitutional rights arose during those discussions. If it did not, it certainly should have and should have been considered. That points out not just the question of the lack of consultation with the native organizations but with the two northern territories generally.

I had to remind the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) about that this afternoon when he was speaking on some of the discussions and relationships with the provinces, and about the conferences which were held between the attorneys general of the provinces and himself in respect of this legislation. No such consultations occurred in so far as the people of the north were concerned. There were no consultations with the elected councils of the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories in respect of how they regarded this legislation.

Had such consultations taken place then the points my neighbour from the Northwest Territories made and which I will be making would have found their way into this bill. I cannot understand the government being so harsh and unfair in respect of the needs of the people in the High Arctic islands and the remote regions of the mainland of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory that it would ask these people to abide by the provisions that are being written into the law by this bill. These people depend for their very livelihood on the firearm. Without it they do not eat. They have no industrial or commercial pursuits.

I think particularly in my riding of the people of Old Crow whose very lives revolve around hunting, trapping, and fishing all year around. That requires the unrestricted, the absolute right to use a firearm. When you take that right away from them or interfere with it, then so far as they are concerned what you are doing, as my friend put it, is taking the grub right off their table. That situation probably exists in many parts of the northern portions of the provinces, but in the Northwest Territories and in the Yukon Territory it is very acute.

The situation in respect of the people of Old Crow I think can best be exemplified by an example. The hon. member for the Northwest Territories used an example. Let me use one. There is a small village in the Yukon called Champagne. An Indian person was walking along in the woods not far from Champagne, which at that time was a small village of 20 or 30 souls. While he was walking through a wooded portion of the valley all of a sudden he found himself face to face with a grizzly bear. His rifle was slung on his back. He did not have time to get the rifle off his back and cope with that grizzly bear. Had he had a hand gun he might have been able to cope with the situation. He did not.

The grizzly bear without a second thought attacked him. With one cuff the native person was on the ground. All he could think of doing, because he could not reach around to get his rifle from his back, was to play possum, to play dead, which he did. He lay on his stomach.

The bear took another swipe at him, and ripped the back of his scalp down over the front of his head. The grizzly bear pawed and sniffed around him.

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All this time the Indian did not utter a sound. He played absolutely dead.

The grizzly bear used his mouth to pick him up by the back of the neck. He gave him one or two more slaps, and dropped him again.

There was not a sound or movement. That man lived, despite the serious mauling he received. That is the type of situation the people who walk in the wilderness are apt to meet every day of their lives.

It is common practice, indeed essential for survival in the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories, to have the right to carry the 44 magnum, which is the common gun used in the bush, rather than a heavy rifle. People carry this firearm in addition to the pack and other gear most carry in the bush.

People engaged in exploration and heavy work carry all sorts of equipment, such as transits and the like, which burden them down. The common weapon for everyone is the 44 magnum. Now, after the right to carry this kind of a weapon has existed for so many years, almost a century from my reading of history, we find there is a restriction—the Solicitor General appears to be ignorant of this fact—which has issued from Ottawa, which has the effect of telling the RCMP that there will be no permits issued for anyone for the carrying of handguns.

Big game guides, outfitters, prospectors, trappers, and others whose livelihood is in the wilderness have been told they will not under any circumstances be issued the permit they have been accustomed to receiving year after year after year for carrying a handgun in the bush. It is unfortunate that the Solicitor General is not in his seat. He said that he has received representations from the prospectors in the Yukon in connection with this matter. However, it is not only the representations by the prospectors that are important. I am sure he has received representations from others. Just as important are the representations from big game guides, outfitters, and those engaged in exploration work in the field. They must have that permit in order to function.

We are now on the verge of spring after a long winter and I urge the Solicitor General, who I hope will read by words tomorrow since he is not here, to revoke immediately this instruction which has been given and which has the effect of denying the people of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon the right to carry handguns in these circumstances.

Let me use the Solicitor General's example in this matter of handguns and firearms generally. He spoke of the need for safety; he spoke of the millions of guns owned in Canada and of the two million or three million individuals who own firearms. He used that, plus the safety argument, plus the accident argument, plus the criminal argument, to say that there are far too many guns lying around loose in the country and therefore we have to impose regulations. My argument against that is simply that, of the millions of owners of firearms in this country, 99 per cent are law abiding citizens and their guns will not be used for unlawful means. Yet for the crimes of a few, for the illegal acts of a few, all of us are to be penalized.