

*Private Members' Business*

• (1750)

Coming in July 1993, the FAC applicants are going to have to present evidence that they have successfully completed a course or a test involving the safe handling and use of firearms and knowledge of the laws relating to all firearms.

This might present a little bit of a hardship but most of the gun clubs and organizations are willing to work with us. I think if people are trained at a young age—one must be 18 or over to have a firearms acquisition certificate—that they will understand that firearms are a specific piece of machinery. It is not so much the firearm that kills as the person behind it.

It is the responsibility of everyone who owns this type of rifle, hand-gun or shotgun to become very familiar with the law.

I have to say that there is a compromise. The people who perhaps do not enjoy hunting or using rifles and firearms or perhaps are afraid of them might consider that we should ban firearms completely. That is totally out of the question.

My colleague tonight has a bill in front of us that suggests that all firearms be registered. One will have to go through a central registration system. The cost is high. There is no doubt about it. I heard my colleague from Cape Breton saying that the costs were perhaps a little bit out of proportion from what we heard before the committee hearings. That is not true. There are millions and millions of various shotguns and hunting rifles and to ask the police force to openly register and trace these, whether you are purchasing a new firearm or selling it second-hand, is asking a great deal.

First, we have to devote their energies to what their duties are as police service people. Second, all restricted firearms have to be registered with the RCMP. Restricted firearms are listed. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, we have particular brochures that outline those restricted firearms. The commissioner keeps a central list of those particular weapons if they are stolen or if the ownership is transferred. This is all covered in the bill that we passed last year.

I also want to say something to my colleague from Quebec with regard to the tragedy that happened at Ecole Polytechnique when 14 young women lost their lives and also at Concordia University where members of

the engineering faculty lost their lives because of someone who perhaps was imbalanced—in one case he was—opened fire with a firearm and took the lives of these particular people. That was uncalled for and no one in this House or from the other place wants to see anything like that happen again. However, registering firearms is not going to resolve that problem at all.

What we have to do is take the specific types of firearms that are indeed the most dangerous and have those registered. We will also enlarge the list of those to be prohibited. Certainly automatics are prohibited. Semi-automatics that have been converted to automatics are prohibited especially if they can be converted within a short period of time.

There are many ranchers, firearms people and hunting clubs within the southern Alberta region to whom I have spoken. They put forth their best thoughts and best ideas when we were putting forth the firearms legislation, Bill C-17.

We upgraded the 1978 firearms legislation. Most of the firearms that are causing us problems come across the border. We have to have customs officers—or contract out to the RCMP or police services people—who understand and know exactly what they are looking for. There is a tremendous amount of money made in the black market with regard to firearms and we have to control that.

I appreciate this opportunity to speak with regard to my colleague's bill. I certainly do not agree with it and in no way could I support it.

• (1755)

**Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the debate today and I wish to congratulate the hon. member for introducing the bill.

I listened to the comments on both sides of the issues and I noted that the person who spoke before me, the hon. member for Calgary Southwest, said she could not accept the complete registration of all firearms. However, she did not say that she was opposed to this bill going to committee. I gather she is in favour of a debate and in favour of it going to committee. Perhaps she might clarify that, or I suppose we will see as the debate proceeds.