

People may feel that government has gone too far in regulating diverse aspects of Canadians lives, but surely this is not the issue on which to take that stand. This is the core of government responsibility. Violent crime has gone too far to allow the Canadian government to fail to take steps to regulate guns, and, fearmongering aside, that is all that this bill will do.

Honourable senators, I really cannot summon up great sympathy for those who are basing their objectives on myths, or who say it will be too much trouble in the interests of public safety to list up to 10 guns on a postcard and send the card and \$10 into the local registry.

I do have real concerns for the aboriginal people whose culture has inculcated the principles of family and community care and the use of firearms, but those concerns have been shared by the Minister of Justice. He has already undertaken extensive consultations with aboriginal communities as to the best way to develop regulations which do not infringe on their constitutional rights, and methods of implementing the law to meet their needs. Still, he and they must acknowledge that misuse of firearms and the tragedy that flows from them is not the exclusive preserve of the non-native population.

Honourable senators, the purpose of guns is to kill. The misuse of guns to kill, maim and threaten is one of the most dangerous challenges to the peace, order and good government of our society. As such, our government, with the massive support of our people, has no alternative but to take the measures contained in Bill C-68 as a matter of public safety.

Honourable senators, I will vote to approve Bill C-68 without amendment.

Senator Sparrow: Would the honourable senator permit two questions?

Senator Stanbury: Certainly.

Senator Sparrow: First, in your initial remarks, you said you see no reason why people would mind admitting they have a gun. I would think those people who legitimately own a gun — there may be some exceptions — have no concern about admitting they have a gun. Every farmer in my country admits he has a gun. People who use guns in crime are the ones who will not admit they have a gun. Would you agree with that? You have been in Turtleford, have you not? You know the areas I am talking about. I am asking you if you believe that the reason there is opposition to this bill is that people are somehow hiding their guns from the rest of the population?

Second, you talk about the government need for gun control now. Is this need any more severe than it was 5, 10, 20 or 50 years ago? Is there any greater crime now that a licensing regime would stop?

Senator Stanbury: Honourable senators, in answer to my honourable friend's first question, I said that I did not believe

anyone would object to admitting to having guns and having their possession recorded. I still do not believe that. When I was on the farm, we had a gun. If someone said we should register that gun, why would we have objected? We were not afraid to say that we had a gun, and we had no resistance to having it registered. This is just a matter of recording that you have the gun.

What was your second question, senator?

Senator Sparrow: Is crime worse now than it was in the past?

Senator Stanbury: Honourable senators, the fact is that the process in Bill C-68 has been going on for 30 or 40 years. The process goes back to 1981, and there was a gun control bill before that. It is gradually coming to be understood by legislators and the public that there is a need for a greater knowledge of where guns are located, and who has them. That is what the committee decided when they dealt with Bill C-17. If a Liberal government had not brought this legislation forward, it would have been brought forward by a Conservative government. Kim Campbell was already preparing the legislation to do exactly what we are talking about today.

Senator Sparrow: Do you know what happened to Kim Campbell?

Senator Stanbury: Yes, I do. However, I doubt that her passage of gun control legislation was the reason for her downfall.

Senator St. Germain: Honourable senators, I rise tonight because I think there may be some doubt as to where I stand on this issue. I want to make sure I am off the fence, especially for Senator Carstairs and others who may not know exactly where I stand.

Senator Stanbury began by saying that he figured there must be two entirely different bills. What we are dealing with, though, are two entirely different worlds. If you live on Wellington Crescent in Forest Hill, or if you live in Aklavik, there is a major difference.

Honourable senators, we came to this place to represent all Canadians. Somewhere along the way, I believe that perhaps we have lost sight of the fact that we represent all Canadians, those in Aklavik, those in Willow Bunch, Saskatchewan, and other places in this great country.

Senator Stanbury began his speech by saying that he has had military experience. Honourable senators, so have I. I spent five years in the military, and I spent about five-and-a-half years as a police officer, therefore I do not stand here inexperienced in the world of guns and violence. I spent months undercover in Vancouver with the drug community. I was an undercover agent in narcotics and various other areas of police work. I think I know a little bit — not much, but a little bit — when it comes to dealing with violence.