

*Criminal Code*

to the sections which would amend the Criminal Code with regard to offensive weapons. It is significant that the provisions in this bill differ substantially with the original proposals contained in Bill C-195, the original bill of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). This raises some very interesting questions. I suggest that the committee must give careful consideration to these.

We are faced with a basic conflict between the legitimate use and regulation of firearms. We must discern how we may best impose restrictions that will effectively limit their improper use. We have been lucky in Canada. We have not had situations like those in respect of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King. Sometimes these influences take a little longer to come to this country. In making these changes, I submit that we must be careful not to turn the responsible and legitimate gun enthusiast into a criminal. We must also ask why the so-called sawed-off rifles and shotguns have been removed from the prohibited category to be placed in the restricted or registerable category. We must ask whether it is prudent to permit the classification of weapons to be exclusively by orders of the Governor in Council. We must ask whether provisions should be included to stop the sale of war surplus weapons at the source rather than legislating restrictively after they reach the market. I am thinking particularly of the United States where at one time people were able to order machine guns from a catalogue.

We may be thankful that we are not forced into a situation of legislating by hysteria and yet we must not let this lull us into a feeling of complacent disregard. Before I move my amendment, I should like to thank the house for the time and patience accorded to me. I have been lengthy because this is a difficult subject to cover. We in this party have set out very clearly where we stand. We feel that these matters affect the conscience of every member of parliament and believe that there should be a free vote. I should like to assure the minister that our criticisms have been offered in the spirit of a sincere and judicious desire to improve upon the criminal legislation of this country. I would furthermore like to express my appreciation to the minister for his efforts in this regard. We do appreciate the difficulties that are inherent in this type of legislation due to the unique multi-religious, racial and linguistic structure of Canada. Nevertheless, we also trust that the minister and indeed all members will take heed and accord due consideration to the manifold

[Mr. Woolliams.]

problems which have yet to be resolved in this particularly viable area of concern to every Canadian.

I shall now move my amendment. I ask:

That the said motion be amended by adding after the words National Defence Act the following: And the said Standing Committee be instructed to make and bring into the house four separate reports in relation to the following matters contained in the bill,

All clauses:

- (A) referring to abortion
- (B) referring to homosexuality and gross indecency;
- (C) referring to lotteries and gambling; and
- (D) all the remaining clauses of the bill.

I have copies of this amendment in French and in English.

You will note, Mr. Speaker, in making the decision in this regard, that you will be breaking new ground. This precedent you establish tonight, Mr. Speaker, will either confine us in a small room under the new rules or permit us to be somewhat expansive. The motion says that we will have second reading and then the bill will go to the committee. We are only saying that surely parliament is paramount over the committees; that we stay here in the House of Commons and that the committees are creatures of parliament. I hope this amendment will receive support from other parties because they may feel the same as we do about the matter so far as it affects the conscience of all Canadians. We only ask that we have an opportunity, with four distinct reports, to express ourselves. We are all different. We all come through a different religious door. We all came up through a different kind of family. Some of us in this House of Commons have adopted children. Some of us feel very deeply about some of the clauses in the bill.

When we are considering a subject which affects the conscience of all of us, surely we should have the privilege of testing it here in parliament. It may be, from what the minister said, that the government has made up its mind and will vote us down; but we want the opportunity of at least being voted down. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to give this matter the fullest consideration. I plead with you. I realize I am breaking new ground. I do not do this lightly. I do it having regard to the feelings in our communities and the pressures from the groups in our communities.

I ask you tonight, Mr. Speaker, if there is any doubt in your mind, to consider this and weigh it with the legal officers who have served the House of Commons well. Do not