

Post described the statute as the toughest gun control law in the nation which mandates an automatic one-year prison sentence for carrying a hand-gun without a licence, but says, however, that it has had little effect.

I could cite other statistics. But surely the minister and his colleagues are not so naive as to visualize criminals licensing and registering their weapons before committing a felony. The only people who will comply with this law are the law-abiding citizens of this nation, the very people for whom this legislation is totally and absolutely unnecessary.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: There are better ways of getting to the core of the criminal problem than using a sledgehammer on the innocent, law-abiding gun owner of this country. Surely the hunters, target-shooters and gun collectors are not criminals, Mr. Speaker. If we dealt with our killers and criminals in a firm, harsh way, it would be the first positive step in stemming the tide of rising murder and violence. The law dealing with those who have threatened violence or use violence in a criminal act requires tightening up and firmer enforcement, and to that extent I welcome the provisions of this bill. The legitimate gun owner, in this particular case, should not be made the scapegoat.

It seems to me that quite a public relations job is being done here. The government has utilized a kid-glove policy in dealing with the criminal element in this country, and it now attempts to take it out on the legitimate gun owner. It has responded to the emotions of hysteria in relation to some dramatic episodes that have taken place in the last year or so. Had these episodes not involved the use of guns, they may have involved the use of some other weapon such as a bomb. My view is that if a person is bound to kill or has an absolute desire to kill, he will kill in one way or another, whether it be with a gun, a bomb, a sledgehammer, a knife or the fist. That is the core of the problem, and that is the problem to which this bill fails to address itself.

● (1700)

Having regard to accidental shootings, surely there is some need for improvement in this area such as by upgrading educational safety programs. I endorse that, as I endorse the idea of a uniform, countrywide mechanism for the training and testing of individuals in safe gun-handling practices. This should be mandatory, but it is not referred to in this bill and there is nothing in the bill that suggests this will be done. I repeat that what we need is stricter enforcement of existing laws, and less coddling of criminals. Stricter gun laws will not cut crime, but proper enforcement of existing laws will.

Let me deal now for a few minutes with the legislation as it relates to civil rights. The legislation itself constitutes a further encroachment upon the basic individual rights and civil liberties of Canadians. This has been the hallmark of this administration. We have had a form of press censorship, which was debated in the House in the last month or so. We have had a wage and price control program which started out to be selective and has now become universal, with the threat of becoming permanent. We have seen a move away from the free market economy. We have more and more government intervention, more regi-

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mentation, more inspectors and more statistics. We have growing confrontation between business and government, government and labour, and we have an increasing tendency toward individual Canadians becoming numbers rather than individuals. We have more licences, more permits, more bureaucracy, and more cost. We are told that the gun registration program in New York costs roughly \$100 per person.

An hon. Member: Where did you find that?

Mr. Mazankowski: Those are the statistics. The way this government accelerates its spending, it will probably be more than that here. Civil liberties and individual rights can no longer be policies of the federal Liberal party. A lifelong Liberal, namely, Don Klein of Edmonton—and we have one or two in Alberta—wrote in the *Edmonton Journal* as follows:

Such legislation is not gun control. It is people control, and an invasion of civil liberties directed only at law-abiding citizens.

Mr. Sharp: Just like the licensing of the automobile.

Mr. Mazankowski: We can go into that during another safety debate. Mr. Klein goes on to state:

This endless barrage of useless legislation such as the proposed gun controls, which we are faced with every day of our lives, is breeding a profound disrespect for the law in this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: Another man, Mr. E. L. Willson from Tofield, Alberta—I am not sure what his political persuasion is—writes the following—

An hon. Member: And where is that?

Mr. Mazankowski: If you would get out to that great province, I could take you around and show you where Tofield is. Mr. Willson writes:

It is my unshakeable belief that if this restrictive piece of gun legislation is enacted the government of Canada will have

- 1) Created in one stroke the most expensive and unenforceable law ever written into the books
- 2) Created a monstrous new society of criminals (former law-abiding citizens who would balk at unfair legislation)
- 3) Made a giant step towards the creation of a totalitarian state, after all what easier country to take over than a disarmed one.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this legislation has been described in various ways. It has been referred to as misleading, ludicrous, useless, irritating, senseless, asinine, pitiful, expensive, stunning, and worthless. Those are not my adjectives; they are an assortment of descriptions I have collected from a number of articles appearing in the press on this subject. I submit to you that all these descriptions are suitable and adequate.

This piece of legislation will create a massive bureaucratic network for the government, the police, the dealer and the public. It will cost millions of dollars to administer, but will do nothing to curb crime and violence. Edmonton city police staff inspector Mitchell has said that Canada's gun laws are already stringent and that our law books are already full of such statutes. He states:

We are taking guns away from people every day and the next day they are back on the street, they are treated too damn lenient.