

*Gun Control*

**Mr. Corbett:** Thousands and thousands?

**Mr. Allmand:** There are thousands and thousands. I read a lot of the letters. Unfortunately, most were based on the circular and not on the Bill. Why this Bill?

**An Hon. Member:** Why?

**Mr. Allmand:** If the Hon. Member will listen, I will explain it, and I will be glad to listen to his arguments in opposition later.

There are still too many crimes with guns being committed in this country. According to all the evidence I have seen, it has been shown very conclusively that in states and countries where there is stricter gun control law, there is lesser crime with guns. The principal purpose of this Bill is to implement stricter gun control. First, to control the general availability of firearms, and, second, as much as possible to prevent the potential dangerous user from gaining access to weapons. I said that that was the purpose. There are too many crimes with guns. If that is the case, we should tighten our present laws to make them even more effective.

Those who complain about a law like this, whereby those who want to use guns must have a licence showing that they are competent, not dangerous, do not have criminal intentions and so on, seem to be obsessed with that type of law and oppose it at any expense or cost. What is very inconsistent with most of these people is that for years in this country in order to drive an automobile, which is a potentially dangerous object, you have to obtain a licence. If you have a history of drunkenness, poor driving or dangerous driving, your licence is taken away.

The purpose of the automobile is transportation. Here you have a situation where you have a gun, the purpose of which is to kill. It has no other purpose but to kill animals and, in certain circumstances, individuals. If there is good rationale for licensing individuals to drive automobiles and trucks, certainly the same reasons and logic apply to that consumer good, the principal purpose of which is to kill.

We licence people who deal with other types of dangerous substances. A pharmacist must get a licence to sell prescription drugs. I apply the same logic to guns. I feel it is necessary in order to reduce the number of crimes with guns in this country.

I also want to point out to the House that there is nothing in this Bill which outlaws guns altogether. There is nothing in the Bill which would take guns away from responsible, law-abiding hunters and sportsmen. I have never introduced a measure that would do that. I believe that hunting by responsible Canadians is a legitimate sport. I feel that the overwhelming majority of Canadians are responsible and will get a licence to possess a gun, just as they get a licence to drive an automobile. However, we would screen out those who are criminally or otherwise dangerous. Therefore, I accept the legitimate use of guns.

I want to deal with a few of the arguments that will no doubt be raised by some Members in the House. They will probably come up with the old saw that guns do not kill, people kill. Of course there is always an individual involved in

a killing. As I said before, the possibility of killing with a gun is much greater than with any other type of weapon. A recent study in the United States shows that the capacity to kill with a gun is five times greater than with any other weapon. Show me the individual who would not rather have somebody go after him or chase him with a knife than with a gun. No doubt, if we have any kind of mobility at all, we would agree that the chances of being killed with a gun is much greater than with another weapon. You hear people arguing that you can kill with a baseball bat. Of course you can, but the purpose of the baseball bat is to hit baseballs. The purpose of most knives is to cut meat, paper, wood, or whatever. The purpose of the gun is to kill animals and to kill people.

● (1620)

Another old saw you hear is that if you outlaw guns, only outlaws will have guns. Again, that statement is based on a complete ignorance of the facts with respect to murder. In this country, two-thirds of the murders are committed by people who are not professional criminals or gangsters. Two-thirds of the murders are committed by people who are not involved in crime, who killed in the context of family emotions or in the context of some problem which has arisen. These are the people who very often go out looking for a gun, and find it in some cases too easily.

While it is true that no matter how strict you make gun laws, the professional criminal, the gangster, will still find guns, my point is that making guns less available will cut down on those two-thirds who are not professional criminals.

There was a young man in Ottawa a few years ago who went out one afternoon, bought a shotgun in a local hardware store, went back to his school and killed two or three of his classmates. He was in a severe emotional state and was able to get that gun without much difficulty. We hear the argument, Mr. Speaker, that by implementing stricter gun laws we are going to enable extreme political movements, such as the communists and the fascists, to take over the country. One has a picture of people with shotguns and rifles shooting at tanks as they roll down the street in Czechoslovakia, thereby stopping some kind of communist takeover. That is a specious argument.

I am coming to the end of my speech, and I want to repeat that of all the consumer goods sold in this country, the most dangerous is the gun. It is the only consumer good the purpose of which is to kill animals and kill people, the one consumer good with the greatest potential to criminal violence.

I would ask Members of Parliament to consider the measures of this Bill seriously. I would ask them not to consider this ridiculous circular which was sent around. If they are going to debate this issue, they should debate the Bill, not the circular. At the beginning of my speech I was afraid Hon. Members were trying to howl me down as if they were afraid to hear any argument on the question. If they are really serious, I would ask them at least to let this matter be sent to committee where it can be given serious study. If their arguments are so good as