

but those who have only a marginal need to have them in their possession, having to meet relatively difficult requirements, have decided not to do so. It seems clear to me from this one example that we have a situation in which gun controls have been effective in diminishing the number of guns within society and the number of incidents in which these guns have been used for violence.

The basis of the hon. member's argument—I hope I do him no injustice in paraphrasing it—is, basically, that if someone really wants to kill another person, he will do so whether he uses a gun or some other means. It may be that those who are determined to kill one of their fellow human beings will find a method for doing so. The fact is that the large number of deaths that occur in Canada as a result of gun use do not take place in situations where there is that degree of premeditation. There are accidental deaths in Canada—about 100 a year—and there are suicides in Canada of about 2,500 a year. There are a large number of deaths that take place, not in situations of great premeditation but as a result of family disputes, periods of passion and sudden anger. There are many deaths which occur because of the mental unbalance, perhaps temporary, of individuals who have access to guns and are able to use them without that kind of long, deep reflection which, say, an organized, contract killer might use.

I think it is significant that of the number of deaths which occur in Canada through the use of guns, about half stem from domestic, family incidents or incidents where close friends are involved, and not in situations where there is a long period of deep-seated determination to do away with another person. They occur in situations of passion that come upon a person suddenly who finds a gun available with which to execute the victim. That is the kind of death which these controls are likely to diminish.

Undoubtedly, murders will still take place in Canada. The fact, now, is that almost half the deaths that take place in Canada occur as a result of gun shootings. It is also the fact that the larger proportion of these could be avoided since they take place in situations of spontaneous passion or anger. This is the kind of incident to which this legislation is directed.

The hon. member for Dauphin cited the case of the automobile. I cannot understand his argument. He said, "Look at the automobile. A large number of deaths take place each year as a result of its use". Is he suggesting, therefore, that we should ban the use of the automobile? Then he dropped the argument at that point. Surely the relevant question is, would he seriously suggest that we do away with licensing of automobile drivers, and would we do away with licensing of automobiles in order to make sure they are in working order and are not a danger to those driving on our roads? Surely, he would not.

Surely, the parallel with automobiles is this: the automobile can be a dangerous instrument, and because it is a dangerous instrument we set tests for those who wish to use it to ensure that they are capable of using it wisely and properly, and we set tests to ensure that the mechanism of the automobile is safe to be on our highways. It is exactly that kind of test that we are proposing to impose in relation to guns, to ensure that those who wish to use them are licensed properly, and to ensure that they will be used safely and wisely and do not fall into the hands of those

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who may use them unwisely as a result of emotional disturbance, as a result of accidents or as a result of circumstances of passion that suddenly arise. This is exactly what we are applying. We are saying, here is an instrument that is capable of great danger and its use in our society should be controlled through regulation to make sure it is only the responsible who use them. That is what this legislation says.

I cannot, for the life of me, understand why members of the opposition are not able to accept that simple argument and support the principle of the legislation on these grounds. They may argue as they may wish in committee as to the details of how these regulations should be properly applied, but the principle is clear: an instrument dangerous to the person using it, and dangerous to the rest of society, should be hedged around with restrictions and controls that ensure as best we can that such instruments will be used prudently and sagely and not recklessly or irresponsibly.

I am anxious that this legislation should go before the committee. I share some of the concerns expressed by the other side that perhaps the provisions which relate to automatic weapons in the hands of collectors which would, under the proposals, become prohibited, may be too severe. We might, in committee, wish to look carefully at how we can enable collectors to maintain automatic weapons as a collection with the automatic weapon denatured, if you like, from its ability to cause damage. That is a matter which might well be considered in committee.

I should like to turn briefly to a rather different aspect of the legislation respecting which I wish to indicate to the House one or two concerns I have, in the hope that these concerns may result in changes the committee will decide to make. The first of these refers to clause 10 of the legislation which proposes to repeal section 178.23 of the Criminal Code. This is the section which ensures at present that notice will be given in 90 days to those who have been subjected to legally authorized wiretapping after the termination of the wiretap. The proposal in the legislation is to repeal that section so there will no longer be an onus upon police officers and those charged with the administration of justice to inform people who have been subject to wiretapping of what has taken place. I can understand some of the concerns the police may have, that in making a very serious investigation, when they are not able to produce immediate results or results in the short term, the provision as it now exists in the code will cause harm by alerting those people, who may very well be guilty of very serious offences, of the fact that they are under scrutiny and surveillance.

I think very few of us in this House would be happy to accept a proposal under which a police officer or member of a governmental administration would be able to open and examine the mail coming to a citizen's home, close it and send on the message, never even informing, if it were an acceptable practice at all, the individual that he was under this kind of surveillance. We in this House would not accept that. We would regard it as an overzealous intrusion into privacy no matter what the motivation by which it was undertaken.

I suggest the same principle applies to wiretapping. It is a very severe intrusion upon privacy, which I think most