

*Explosives Act*

those who represent rural ridings. The members in country ridings are fearful of the regulations that are to be imposed upon people in country areas who use cartridges and so on.

The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) said that the bill appears to adopt a law and order approach, and probably it does. The problem with law and order approaches these days is that many people construe the term "law and order" as a Spiro Agnew approach whereby violence is met with violence. We have had dramatic demonstrations of this in the United States, such as the one at Kent University, and other places, where dissident groups demonstrated. Many people, more especially democratically minded people, become excited and grow fearsome of this law and order approach. I would hope that when we talk about a law and order approach we are talking of strengthening democratic institutions, of giving the people the right to dissent, but at the same time giving them the right peacefully to demonstrate in support of the ideas they hope to express. Because in the final analysis, democracy depends upon persuasion. I do not think it depends on persuasion by means of violence, otherwise we fall into the dictatorship trap. Democracy depends upon peaceful persuasion, and I would hope that we embrace that concept when we talk of law and order.

We have seen instances in Canada of disorder. A recent incident took place in Toronto during the visit of Premier Kosygin when a group of people attempted to demonstrate, not in a peaceful manner but in a violent manner. They demonstrated not only against his visit but against the things for which they thought he stood. These people are perfectly entitled to their views on what Premier Kosygin stands for, and I would be the last to deny them the right to demonstrate. But in so demonstrating, I think they must employ peaceful means. We had another example of this when Premier Kosygin visited Ottawa and was attacked by a person on Parliament Hill. This could have led to an international incident. These are the types of actions that I do not think fall within the democratic process of rightful dissent, and I think we should take steps to curtail such expressions.

In the 1970 crisis in Quebec, commonly referred to as the FLQ crisis, there was evidence that members of the FLQ had obtained explosives by means of criminal acts and other methods. This again created a fear among many people in the country that the members of the FLQ were not acting in accordance with law and order. It was felt that they would have done far better if they had used the democratic process and attempted to persuade others of the validity of their cause.

Many members who come from country ridings have had wide experience with the use of explosives, more especially guns and ammunition, but I would hope that they would see the necessity for controlling guns and ammunition. At the moment, you need a licence to obtain certain guns, and perhaps when this bill is passed and the regulations published certain steps will have to be taken before a person can obtain ammunition. I would hope that within the areas of their responsibility they would accept these restrictions in order to control violence of the kind we have in Canada today.

[Mr. Gilbert.]

As a person of Irish parentage I take no comfort from what is happening in Ireland today. When I hear of the bombings and explosions which take place there, it makes me speak out for some control of explosive materials. I therefore find I must express myself in favour of the principle of this bill. The hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) said he felt the day may come when there will be a change in the social values held by people and we are able to control explosives in a far better way than that prescribed in Bill C-7. I hope the day does come when we take that approach.

I am reminded of the approach taken by English policemen—or, as they call them in England, "bobbies"—to the use of guns and the carrying of guns. The hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay) said that some officers in Canada measure their hopes for success and promotion on the number of convictions they obtain, that sometimes they lay charges that are cheap in nature to obtain convictions. I wonder whether, if we took the English approach to the carrying of guns by police officers, the police officers here would adopt a totally different attitude, which would lead people in the community to do the same.

• (1740)

I think we are impressed by the violence exhibited in the country to the south of us. It may be the climate of the times which had brought about the use of so many guns and other weaponry in the United States. I hope that we in Canada will take a sensible approach to this gun problem and that in future our policemen, members of the RCMP and other forces, will not carry guns. In this way something might be done to lessen the violence which exists in our own country today. This would be in keeping with the thinking of my hon. friend from Skeena who is usually very progressive in his views. He has taken what is known as a hard line in connection with ammunition because of his experiences as a young man in a small country town. He thought if he could control the use of explosives, then surely other like-minded men and women could do the same.

**Mr. Howard (Skeena):** You obviously were not listening.

**Mr. Gilbert:** I should like to think so myself, but I do not believe the facts permit us to reach that conclusion. I would think that a large number of the violent acts which are permitted today are directly attributable to the ease with which guns and ammunition may be obtained, so I would hope steps could be taken to deal with this. My hon. friend from Skeena said criminals would find a way to obtain guns and ammunition in any case. They probably would. But I respectfully submit that we as citizens have a duty to make it difficult for them to find a way. This is why there have to be regulations concerning guns and ammunition. A social responsibility rests on members from rural ridings. If people who live there want guns and ammunition, they could follow certain procedures which are for the benefit of the community as a whole.

The definitions clause is extremely wide. I note that it embraces rockets, firecrackers and so forth. It is coincidental that the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) should have received a letter recently concerning firecrackers. Our first test will be on May 24, and