

Mr. Reynold Rapp (Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Smith) has instructed me to ask that this motion be withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member have the authority of the house to withdraw this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Order discharged and motion withdrawn.

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

SUGGESTED AMENDMENT TO DEAL WITH OFFENSIVE WEAPONS

Mr. Fernand E. Leblanc (Laurier) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of setting up a special committee to study matters relating to the import, export, production, sale and purchase of firearms, and that this committee should study the advisability of amending the Criminal Code, section 82 and the following sections with regard to offensive weapons.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I should like to point out that the notice of motion includes the word "export" and that as Canada is obviously not a firearms' exporting country, I think it would be reasonable to delete the word "export" from the motion.

Newspapers reported recently, Mr. Speaker, that the right hon. Prime Minister, Mr. Pearson, deemed it would be necessary for the federal government to exercise a more rigid control over the ticklish problem related to firearms. Moreover, the announcement came at the same time that President Johnson was also considering requiring from Congress tighter regulations in regard to the same problem.

Canada, Mr. Speaker, must not wait until a slaughter like the one in Austin, Texas, happens to solve such an urgent and complex problem.

I have studied this problem since the assassination of President Kennedy, and on January 20, 1966, I had the honour of presenting in the House of Commons the notice of motion which you have just read.

Since then I had the privilege of discussing it with many French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians; a private television station, Télé-métropole, on channel 10, even invited me to explain to the people my views on the control of firearms in Canada.

I can assure you that the comments received are favourable and that most people

would be glad to see the Criminal Code amended so as to allow government control of firearms.

Indeed, it is the duty of the federal government to protect society with the means under its jurisdiction, of which the Criminal Code is one. It is also the duty of the federal government to co-operate with police forces in Canada and with financial institutions and particularly banks which spend millions of dollars each year on their own security. It is up to the federal government to take all the necessary steps to stop the crime wave which not only causes tremendous financial losses but also costs many human lives.

According to the daily bulletin of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, volume 24, number 231, dated Thursday, December 2, 1965, the number of people against whom charges are laid has increased from 389,326 in 1962 to 453,136 in 1964.

These figures speak for themselves and show clearly that the federal and provincial justice departments must join forces to fight this incredible increase in crime. Obviously, an increasingly closer co-operation between the services responsible for law and order is necessary and the fight against crime should be given priority by governments at all levels.

However, I should like to draw the attention of the house to offences reported by police involving the use of offensive weapons. This DBS report shows that such offences are increasing. In 1962, 2,608 offences were reported, 2,900 in 1963 and 2,933 in 1964.

Offences do not tell of course the whole story as far as offensive weapons are concerned, because in many cases the offence will be classified under a different heading, for instance, robbery with violence.

• (5:10 p.m.)

And at present, statistics do not show separately the crimes committed with offensive weapons. While the minister responsible for statistics is here, I would like to call his attention to the fact that the statistics, at the present time do not show separately the crimes committed with offensive weapons.

A statement prepared by the Montreal police shows that between 1950 and 1957, the average yearly number of hold-ups in Montreal was 225, whereas in 1964 and 1965 it was 793 and 603 respectively.

The 1961-1964 edition, published in February 1966, of the book containing statistics on homicides shows that the number of homicides committed with firearms has increased from 84 in 1961 to 105 in 1965.