

*Government Orders*

I am very pleased that the House has agreed to support this important bill, and I hope it will be passed very shortly.

• (1310)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question.

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

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[English]

### EXPLOSIVES ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-71, an act to amend the Explosives Act, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (for the Minister of Natural Resources)** moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

**The Deputy Speaker:** When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Goodale (for the Minister of Natural Resources)** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. George S. Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C-71, an act to amend the Explosives Act. Today I will address some of the concerns members opposite have raised during the second reading debate and I will emphasize the major points government members raised during that debate.

Let me begin by thanking members opposite for expressing support from their respective parties for Bill C-71 during the debate on second reading of the proposed legislation.

I note from *Hansard* that during the debate the hon. member for Matapédia—Matane asked what is the use of marking explosives if we do not monitor them. My response is that we do. Canada's explosives inspectors are doing an excellent job of monitoring legally licensed makers, distributors and users of explosives in the country.

There are concerns about how terrorists and biker gangs get their explosives. Terrorists typically purchase stolen explosives on the black market, or they make their own if they have the expertise, as was the case in the horrific bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building this summer.

Sources for stolen explosives include explosives obtained from break-ins and thefts from storage magazines on construction sites, in mines and quarries. Naturally these incidents fall within the jurisdiction of Canada's police agencies. In any case I submit to the House that it is not a common occurrence in the country. The mere fact that it can happen does not require a maze of restrictive and unnecessary regulations from any government, least of all the Government of Canada.

Furthermore, explosives that are used or intended for use in criminal activities are never purchased from legitimate vendors licensed under the terms of existing federal explosives legislation. That is because legitimate vendors must keep accurate and complete transaction records for all explosives they sell. These records, coupled with the records of police security checks that are required under the terms of the existing Explosives Act, could easily provide a clear paper trail of evidence to anyone who used legally obtained explosives to commit a crime.

Let me return to the issues that are more closely related to the proposed legislation before the House. With respect to the length of time it has taken to submit the amendment to Parliament, I want to make a few points.

Officials at Natural Resources Canada have indicated to me that shortly before the Montreal convention on the marking of plastic explosives was signed in 1991 they joined their colleagues from national defence, customs, and transport to prepare a memorandum to cabinet regarding the proposed amendments to the Explosives Act. As members of the House may recall, there were significant changes in the structure of federal government departments in mid-1993. Shortly thereafter a federal election was held, resulting in even more significant change. Since then the Government of Canada has been working hard to put Canada on a positive new course for the future, to revitalize employment opportunities for all Canadians, to attack major issues such as the deficit and debt and, in short, to get Canada moving again. The government is delivering the good government that Canadians wanted and deserved. In addition we are making excellent progress to reach a number of positive public policy objectives.