

Explosives Act

new muffler and that is no joke. I do not intend to attach a contraption that will produce that kind of a result. If the minister is going to provide protection to those who use explosives in mines, quarries, construction companies and other legitimate users, he will not fool around with the type of thing you put in your hand and which goes bang when shaking hands with another fellow. That, apparently, is the purpose of this act.

We could raise the constitutional problem. We do not have a constitution like that of the United States which permits everyone in that country to have a gun. When the Criminal Code was before us, the Canadian public decided they were not in favour of a total restriction of firearms in this country. I am not going to participate in accomplishing the same thing through the back door by including in this act safety cartridges, ammunition for guns and shotgun shells. It is quite true that under one act a person may have a gun, but under another act he is not permitted to have ammunition for that gun. That is fine for collectors because sometimes they are odd people. Some want ammunition, some do not. Some collectors only buy ammunition and no guns. They consider that a collection.

When dealing with another piece of legislation, the government stated that approximately 35 per cent of the population in Canada lived in four major urban centres. If that is true, I agree that in most cases a person may not have any desire to own a gun or to purchase ammunition. If he did, he could go to the police station, buy a gun, get a permit to buy ammunition and another permit to transport the ammunition down a highway. He could make all those special requests because it would be for a very special purpose. However, the exact opposite is true in my part of the country. Almost everyone owns a gun and almost everyone goes hunting. The other day I talked to a chap who had been working too hard. I suggested that it would be very easy for him to go to Spain for a holiday. This fellow was not poor. He could afford to go to Spain or some other part of Europe. He said he would rather go hunting. A large percentage of the people in northern Canada consider going hunting with their companions to be an ideal vacation.

The minister stated that a person selling ammunition would have to have a licence, and would have to meet stringent requirements in order to retain explosives. The minister will say that is not true. Probably that is what he thinks. However, I am not sure what some of his subordinates think. I do not believe the minister is sure either. Every time we have a problem with a piece of legislation, and I am thinking now of the Unemployment Insurance Act, the government says "you people passed the act". Then, they say this provision is not in the act, it is in the regulations. Damn near everything in this country is done by regulation, not legislation.

I suppose the regulations will limit the ability of a small service station operator in my area who had to pull political strings to sell ammunition. This is in a remote area where fishing and hunting is of prime importance. This service station operator had to get a licence to sell hunting and fishing licences. He probably has a dozen cartons of shotgun shells, not more than a case of 22 shells, probably eight or 10 boxes of ammunition in the common sizes of

[Mr. Peters.]

303, 306, 308, 30/30, the common types of ammunition for hunting in that area. Under the regulations made under this act, he will no longer be allowed to have these.

I cannot think of any offence that has occurred where it would have been an advantage to restrict sales of ordinary ammunition. I am sure that in most robberies and other offences that type, small arms, sidearms, revolvers, Lugers and similar types of equipment are used. Most people that I know do not stock Luger ammunition, 9 mm ammunition and center fire cartridges for 38's. They do not stock that kind of ammunition because they do not have permits to sell it. I suggest this kind of ammunition is obtained from another source that is readily available to the element that has a use for it. If so, we should discuss that openly and come to some conclusion on it.

I strongly urge the minister not to include clause 2 in the bill. This includes a definition of explosives, ammunition of all descriptions, fireworks, safety flares and so on. I am well aware that some of these have a danger. Safety flares may have a danger, but I do not know what it is. They may burn the house down. I can remember as a young boy stealing torpedoes or thunder claps from the railroad. I put them on the railroad track, the train ran over them and made one hell of a noise.

Mr. Alexander: You didn't do that.

Mr. Peters: Yes. That happened when I was only seven or eight years of age. I agree with the minister and his officials that the railway company has an obligation, not so much for my sake and the trouble I may cause, but for its own safety. Why should they let children louse up their safety and signal systems by leaving these in an unlocked shack along the railway track? That is like Kresge's putting all their small junk and candies on a low counter for children to steal. It is an unreasonable temptation. The people who should do something about this are those who cause the temptation. The banks do not put sample money on the counter because they know it is not advantageous. The railways should display the same caution.

I can tell you some things that may happen. Before safety flares were generally available, many policemen got them from railway workers, and these flares were used to good advantage. We are not requesting that the railways tighten their control over flares, but we are saying that they should be placed in the same position as anybody else with regard to handling explosives.

• (1610)

Although we may not stop this bill from going through, I have news for the minister. I do not give a damn what he does about ammunition in northern Ontario; if we do not get it any place else we will get it from United States tourists, just as we get fishing tackle. They will bring it in and none of it will return with them. If that happens, the control now possible through the orderly sale of ammunition in a store will be totally destroyed and the minister will be caused trouble that he never expected.

I am sure the minister is aware that if a person has a .38 or Luger which is registered with the police, such a gun would seldom be used for an illegal purpose. The same is true of ammunition. I have always been concerned, partly because of my ignorance, about the growing spread of the