

*Criminal Code*

pleasure in seizing every time they can the rifles and guns of people who need them.

I am afraid that this bill which is excessively permissive will further strip honest people of a firearm to which they are attached, a firearm they want and would then have the right to keep in their possession in their homes. That is why, as I said this afternoon, I repeat that bills like this should be selected and graded so we would have time to discuss and vote with the necessary amendments to strengthen that bill, and when it would come back to the House, I think it would be easier to pass. What did happen? It was buried in an omnibus bill and the witnesses were indeed listened to but without giving it more attention to bring in the amendments they were proposing about firearms. That is why I say that we cannot support Bill C-51, not because it is entirely bad, no, but because it is an omnibus bill and we cannot afford to get everyone into the same boat.

For example, is the registration of firearms going to cost \$10 or \$15? We do not know. The regulations will determine that and the regulations are not written by members of parliament but will again be written by public servants who will determine the amount of money they need to pay to have the right to own a firearm. But will those permits be renewable every year now? Every five years? Every ten years? That is another thing, we do not know yet, Mr. Speaker. I think there are many obscure issues in this bill and it is impossible at present for us to give our support to that part of the bill. I say that this bill operates to the detriment of honest citizens. We also find the following statements in the A. McCann report which I realize has been tabled in committee. I quote:

Estimates to the effect that 7 to 10 millions firearms are owned by Canadian citizens certainly prove that a lot of people 2 to 3 millions perhaps are interested enough in firearms to buy and maintain them. Only a few of these weapons are meant for illegal use. Although firearms owners are entirely in favour of effective controls, it seems unreasonable to subject a great number of citizens to such impracticable regulations. As for revolvers, controls on this type of firearms have existed in Canada since before the Second World War. These controls have been tightened in the sixties and since then their possession has become so difficult that it borders on prohibition.

And on that point they are right for I have made the experience myself. In spite of that, these controls did not result in a decrease of gun usage for criminal activities.

This is what I want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker. Even with all those precautions, another report says that the crime rate has increased and that criminals are more active than ever. It is not by refusing everyone a permit that we can decrease the incidence of criminal acts.

A comparison of the crime rates in countries with strict gun control has proven its use, unless other appropriate factors be considered as well. For every country, the comparisons emphasize the importance of history, population, family life and mutual respect. In the case of criminals, there is a premeditated intent to violate the law. If this includes the use of a firearm, violation of another law by the criminal is therefore completely unimportant. The criminal will always be able to obtain the weapons he needs from illegal sources. This is why we cannot believe that any control or prohibition can have a concrete effect on the criminal use of firearms.

The next paragraph talks about mental patients. I believe mostly in some control at the level of weapon sales, but this control that we shall have will be another federal tax on illegal

[Mr. Gauthier (Roberval).]

sales. Instead of using the police for imposing a legal control, the government wants another licence traffic. And everyone knows what this traffic is like in politics. Everyone knows that this is the source of the whole problem. There will again be people who will not be entitled to hold permits but who will still get them because of political patronage. This will again come into play. If there was a legal commission to issue permits without any fee involved, there would be much less political influence. And this is always what I fear in such cases.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if the federal government requires a permit for firearms trading, this is quite well for the trade. However, we do not want some regulations to deprive once again some honest citizens. This is what we fear in our areas especially according to the reports which I received at my office. All those who came to my office are afraid, but I think their fears will soon be justified if this goes on, because the minister mentioned that only the Indians, the Inuit and those who earn their living by hunting would have free permits, but they are not alone.

There are other Canadians who do not hunt for a living but who like that sport and who also have the right to own a gun either for their own pleasure or for their personal needs, such as farmers, tradesmen, businessmen and those who have great financial responsibilities. Mr. Speaker, I understand that this bill, regardless of what we might say, is going to be passed anyway, but I simply wanted explain why I was opposed to it, once again not because the whole bill is bad, but because of that famous omnibus bill that I have never swallowed and will never swallow.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

● (2040)

[*English*]

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the motion in the name of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford). All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. Members:** Yea.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

**Mr. Basford:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions through the usual channels as to when a division on this motion might be taken and it has been agreed through the usual channels, I believe, that it be taken at the close of the question period tomorrow.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** That is the gist of the discussions, and it is quite agreeable to us on this side.