

Government Orders

That is why it is more than important, it is crucial to our support for this bill that this amendment be supported.

This is a way of not only ensuring better environmental legislation, it is also a way of ensuring that members of Parliament are included in the process and therefore Canadians are included in the process. That is what I have heard from people. They want in, Mr. Speaker. They want to be listened to. They want the Canadian environment, the international environment, to be assured. They do not want any more backroom deals. They do not want any more little smirks and chuckles. They want to make sure that the Canadian and international environment is looked at realistically, not in an obstructionist way, but the best environment possible for the world. They want the regulations to support that.

That is what we are asking. We want the members of the House to review the regulations. It is a simple request. I ask for your support.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I rise very briefly to support what the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has just said and what the hon. member for Skeena said, and the motion of my friend and colleague, the member from Saskatchewan.

I was on the committee that studied Bill C-80 which was the first gun control bill and then Bill C-17 which became the real gun control bill and which has become law.

I want to talk about how we came to get this particular section. Before I do I want to say how important, to reiterate again what the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands said, the regulations are. They are the teeth of the bill.

When you get these bills you really get a law. The drafters cannot put everything in the law so they put the general principles in the law and then they allow the government, the bureaucrats really, the ministry, to enact by regulation the parts of the law. You really get most of the legislation by regulation.

That is the problem we were faced with in the gun control bill. As I said we got a bill to control guns. We pre-studied the bill. Really it was Bill C-80 that went for pre-study. We held hearings. Then the bill was revised and became Bill C-17.

• (1750)

We studied that bill and we gradually began to work through amendments, very much like this bill. We began to reach a broader consensus. We still had a problem. It was safe to say that a large majority of people in the country wanted, as the polls showed, stronger gun control.

There was a minority in the country, mainly gun owners, who were afraid that gun control would go too far and would penalize them. There were a lot of crazy people and wild groups that had their views. They did not want any sort of gun control. But there were legitimate users of guns. I changed my view on this. I see some of my colleagues who helped persuade me that there were legitimate users of guns for hunting, fishing and for their farms. They had to have regulations which were reasonable regulations.

Originally, these people had a lot of false information about the bill. Once they got more information—and I am speaking of the gun control bill, I am drawing a parallel here—they were a little more open to the bill. They still had some concerns. They were concerned about the regulations. For example, how many clips could they put in their gun and so on. That was going to be done by regulations.

We also set up an advisory council so that people who were opposed to guns, those who wanted gun control, those who had concerns, guns clubs, wildlife people and so on, were mixed together in this group and we made sure there was a balance. They would advise the minister and the department. Then the department would bring down regulations. As a further protection, we wanted to have, as the member for Skeena said, public disclosure and parliamentary scrutiny. We wanted those regulations out in the open. We wanted people to see them before they came into effect. We did not want a process that would just delay the bill. You delay the regulation so that you never have any legislation at all. We had to walk on our tip-toes on this.

What the government came up with was a section exactly like this. It said a regulation passed under the bill, in that case the gun control bill, in this case the environment bill, must be laid before Parliament 20 days before the regulation would come into effect. It is not hard on the bureaucracy to do that. That could be done. Fifteen sitting days after the regulation is laid before