

There are more guns in Saskatchewan per capita than there are in Toronto and Montreal, but at two o'clock in the morning I would rather walk in any part of the province: in any small town where everyone has a gun, on 20th Street, on 2nd Avenue, instead of walking down these streets that have no guns but, instead, have hired guns and policemen running around.

I do not understand this legislation. Are inheritors of weapons going nuts when their parents die? Do they go on a shooting spree? Are they saying, "Gee, my parents died; I've got a gun; I am going to go nuts today." That is what this bill is about.

Are trap shooters assaulting Rosedale or Westmount? I do not think so.

In all these situations, everyone has a firearm. I do not know how many of you have been to a shooting range, but they do not have any accidents on shooting ranges. I tried to find out if there had been any such accidents, and I found that there had been none. Everyone has a gun, but nobody is dead. How can that be?

Guns do not kill people; people kill people. That is the problem the Liberal government should be addressing. The problem is about drug addiction and alcoholism and gang violence and broken homes and family abuse, and no one is attending to those problems. This is the great scam, the great escape. We will impose gun registration to keep people quiet for a while, and we will allow all the other violence to continue.

**Hon. Richard J. Stanbury:** Listening to the debate so far makes me think that we are talking about two entirely different bills. The interpretation of what the bill says on one side is completely different from the interpretation of what it says on the other side.

Senator Tkachuk has asked us whether we think that all those people who are against the bill are crazy. Are all the people who are in favour of the bill crazy? There are many more people for the bill than against it.

Honourable senators, if I may, I wish to make a brief contribution to the debate.

I have a rural background and I have a military background, so I quite understand the productive and practical uses of guns. I can understand the attraction, and even the obsession with guns that some people develop. However, it would never have occurred to me on the farm or in the army that anyone would object to having guns in their possession recorded.

I have always known that the purpose of a gun was to kill, as painlessly as possible, a quarry as game or as food. I have also known that there are those who misuse guns to kill or maim other human beings or themselves, or to threaten to kill or maim others — neighbours, wives or children, or anyone else with whom they differ. I have always known that there are people in the hands of whom possession of a gun is not safe, such as those suffering

from emotional or mental stress, or alcohol or drug-induced conditions. I have always assumed that society is entitled to know who has guns and when those protecting society are likely to be inhibited by the possession of guns by others.

The first time I came into face-to-face contact with the issue of gun control was during the regime of Prime Minister Mulroney. He had a young Minister of Justice for whom I had a good deal of respect. Her name was Kim Campbell. She brought forth a bill creating a fairly comprehensive firearms regime. All of the things that Senator Tkachuk was complaining about, the procedure you have to go through to get a gun, came from Bill C-17. That was passed by the other place, and it found its way into the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, on which both Senator Spivak and I sat. I welcomed it, as did the Progressive Conservative members of the committee, including the Conservative chairman, Senator Nathan Nurgitz, now Mr. Justice Nurgitz of the Manitoba Supreme Court.

We did our usual, in those days, non-partisan study of the bill and agreed to pass it without amendment, but we instructed our chairman to accompany that action with a letter which strongly recommended other steps, the most substantial of which was gun registration. That was the main recommendation of our committee and of the Senate at that time. I believe that all of the Liberal and Conservative members on that committee endorsed that report, and the letter which accompanied it, signed by our most eminent chairman. I do not recall a single voice being raised against it as it received third reading in this house. There is now this great uproar on this very point. I could speculate as to the cause and source of the uproar.

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It is always legitimate for those in a business affected by a bill to lobby against it. Of course it is legitimate for those who seriously believe that registration will somehow impinge upon their legitimate use of target or hunting firearms to do their best to keep their sport or their means of gaining a living as unfettered as possible, within the limits and within the interests of public safety. However, the pile of misinformation that has been dissipated among the Canadian public, and has, through yellow journals, professional agitators and biased newsletters, found its way into the multitude of missives sent to the members of this house, and in many cases by well-meaning but emotionally charged people, has been downright scandalous. Some of it is so ridiculous as to be funny, but most of it is intended to prejudice our legislative process, and that must be taken seriously.

Some of it has a foreign tinge. Some say, "I have the constitutional right to carry a gun." Most people should know that that is part of the American Constitution. In Canada, we recognize that a democratic government is formed by citizens to ensure the security of the person. Our Constitution imposes on the government the obligation to preserve peace, order and good government.