

*Gun Control***PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS**

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE**AMENDMENT RESPECTING GUN CONTROL**

All items preceding No. 451 allowed to stand by unanimous consent.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East) moved that Bill C-451, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (Gun Control) be read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to move second reading of Bill C-451, a Bill designed to bring about more effective gun control in this country.

First, I would like to explain to the House the provisions of the Bill. I think this is extremely important because the exact provisions of the Bill have been distorted beyond belief by various circulars which have been distributed throughout this country.

This Bill deals principally with only two matters. The first is to change the presently existing firearms acquisition certificate, which was introduced in 1977, to a firearms possession certificate containing the same criteria as the firearms acquisition certificate.

Before 1977, there was little or no control over long guns, rifles and shotguns in this country. One could go into a hardware store or sporting goods store and buy a shotgun or rifle without any requirements, testing or screening. Under the 1977 legislation, to buy a new long gun a firearms acquisition certificate must be obtained. This means that those with a criminal record or a history of violence, instability, or alcoholism, could be refused this firearms acquisition certificate by the police in the local community.

Even if one might qualify under those criteria, because it takes a few days between the application for and the granting of the certificate, there is a cooling off period. This could be beneficial in a situation where one might want the gun for the purpose of doing something violent, on the spur of the moment.

● (1610)

When I presented Bill C-83 in 1966, the provision that I put forward was one whereby the principles of the firearms acquisition certificate—

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is one of the few times that private Members get an opportunity to speak. I think it behooves the House to be listening to the one who is speaking.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member's point is very well taken.

Mr. Allmand: As I was saying, when I presented Bill C-83 in 1976 as Solicitor General, that Government Bill contained principles with respect to the firearms acquisition certificate whereby it would have applied to all those who possess long

guns and not just to those who purchase new guns. Bill C-83 was not passed because the session came to an end. When the Bill which came after it, Bill C-51, was introduced, it was watered down to the extent in that the firearms acquisition certificate licensing proposal only applied to new guns. This Bill intends to apply the criteria of the firearms acquisition certificate to all those who possess weapons. It would mean that those who possess long guns, rifles and shotguns, must have what would become the firearms possession certificate.

The only other provision and change that it makes in the law is that not only would you have to produce the firearms possession certificate when you buy a gun as you now do with the firearms acquisition certificate, but whenever you purchase ammunition, you would also have to produce your firearms possession certificate.

Those are the only two things that this Bill attempts to do. It does not do most of the things put forward in a circular that was distributed throughout this country and which provoked a lot of opposition and concern. I agree with the concern that was expressed, but this is a very dishonest circular, not signed by any individual or association. It shows the cowardice and the dishonesty of not all, but many of the groups dealing with the issue of gun control.

I want to go through some of the items in the circular and to state whether or not they are in the Bill. The first thing it says about Bill C-451 is this:

All retail sales of firearms to be handled through a new Government agency only.

False. There is nothing in the Bill on that point.

Applications must be made to purchase any firearm, and must be posted and published before approval, to allow people who oppose the application to register a complaint.

There is nothing in the Bill on that.

Possession of any firearm by police permit only.

That is one of the few things that is correct. In order to possess a firearm, you would have to get a firearms possession certificate. That is one out of three that is correct.

Compulsory registration of all firearms by serial number.

Absolutely false. There is absolutely nothing in the Bill about that.

Permit holders must file annual reports as to the use and condition of all firearms in their possession—

Absolutely false, there is no such thing in the Bill.

No firearm may be disposed of by sale, barter, gift or bequest.

Absolutely false. It also states it must be turned over to the police. That is absolutely false.

I could go on. There is a whole list of submissions in this circular that was sent everywhere in this country. I must say it was even sent on by some Members of Parliament. Of the ten items in the circular which are meant to describe Bill C-451, only one is correct. On the basis of this circular, people all across this country, some with justification, have written thousands and thousands of letters to protest the Bill.