

*Measures Against Crime*

and put them into a timetable straightjacket by means of a computer. This has been done very thoughtlessly.

We have set up what is known as a scattered timetable. In the first period a student may attend an English class with 30 other students. The next period may be mathematics and there may only be two students from the first group. The next could be a French period with no one from the first group. What we have done is take that student away from any possibility of being part of an established group. We have taken him or her away from interacting socially and learning how to adjust to a group.

When I, and I am sure most other members, went to school, we belonged to a home form class. We moved with that class. We were part of that group. The teachers knew the students in that home form class. In the Brompton incident, two teachers were looking for that student on the same day. I am sure both teachers did not know they both taught that particular student.

There is a real problem of identification in the schools because of the scattered timetable. I am perhaps spending more time on this than I should, but it is something I know about, and it concerns me because I think we are creating a very dangerous precedent in our society.

Young people do not learn how to become part of a peer group when they are scattered. When they leave school, and they leave early, partly because they did not become part of a group within the school, they do not know how to adjust within a society. They are in conflict with society. They have not learned the social intercourse which is necessary. We are creating an element in our social policy which will inevitably lead to more violence.

I now wish to deal briefly with the bill. While I have some difficulty with it, I cannot understand the strong opposition to the bill because there are elements of it that are very good. When discussing this bill, the opposition glosses over certain things. There are some basic purposes we have to look at.

This bill attempts to prevent criminals and psychopaths from getting hold of guns. That is not an easy proposition. The bill is perhaps most imperfect in this attempt, but it is attempting to do that.

I do not think that the matter of registering the owner of the gun in the way set out in the bill will be very effective. There are some real difficulties in this area. I do not like the idea of two guarantors. In the many years that I signed passports, all I did when signing was to say that I had known that person, usually a student, for two years. I did not have to say that I approved of that person or that I thought that person was good, bad or indifferent. I just had to say that for two years I had known the person whose name was on the passport.

● (1550)

I think as a guarantor I would not have objected when asked whether a person was or was not a good person, if I had to make some kind of valuation, moral or otherwise, of that person. So I think this is something we have to look at somewhat differently. Yes, I think we should licence the gun owner but in some other way, because, don't forget, the purpose is to prevent criminals and psychopaths from owning guns. But in some way we should be able to

[Mr. McRae.]

register an individual by merely having him apply for a licence and have the licence looked at in some way or other by the police or other authorities, to ensure that he isn't a known criminal or, even more important, that he is not a dangerous psychopath, a person who could use a gun for the purpose we are talking about, that is, for a violent purpose. I think this might be a better approach. That same registration card could then be used to buy ammunition, to buy another gun, and so on.

The second purpose of the legislation has to do with more care in the use of guns. One of the things which has been absent from this debate as far as the opposition is concerned is statistics of the deaths incurred from firearms. In the year 1974, the last year for which I have figures, some 1,500 people in this country dies as a result of the use of firearms. Only 269 were the result of homicides and, as I understand it, close to two thirds of those were homicides caused by people known to the person who committed the murder. So really we are dealing with the use of guns within families. Over a thousand of the deaths caused by the use of guns were by suicide. We are dealing with the use of guns by persons who are not basically criminals.

The person who commits suicide is not a criminal. The person who gets drunk and so on and gets into a fight and kills someone is basically not a criminal when he starts. This is the dangerous use of guns of about which we must be concerned. It represents more than four fifths of all the deaths by firearms. I do not know how we can escape those figures. To me they are extremely important. Whether the bill effectively deals with this aspect I am not certain. I think there may be other things we can do. But to say that we are restricting the law-abiding citizen and ignoring the criminal is to ignore the statistics completely.

I think there are some important things in this bill. For instance, it should be stressed that it is a criminal offence to leave a loaded gun in a home or to leave a gun on the seat of a car. I think that what has to be done in the bill is to specify these things, put them down and say what is a criminal offence in this respect. I hope amendments will be made in this direction.

Another point I should like to make is this: the bill is an attempt to penalize criminals. I think we have all accepted the fact that there is a portion in the bill which would make it automatic that when a gun is used in the commission of a crime the person who uses it should get a sentence in addition to the sentence going with the crime. I think one year is too light. I would make it two years to 14 years rather than one year to 14 years.

Another important feature of the bill is that it does allow the police to remove firearms when there is a very definite sense of danger, when there is danger that can come from the use of those firearms. I think the police must be able to remove those weapons. When an individual has violent habits, when an individual is drinking, when, for instance in the case of a quarrel between husband and wife the wife feels she is going to be killed with a gun, it is important that the police be able to remove that gun.

I have one other point. I find it difficult to understand the person who says, "If a gun is not available some other weapon would be used." I know of one incident and, I know one individual involved rather well. A person drink-