

*Government Orders*

of the Crees of Quebec, specifically requested the inclusion of a non-derogation clause.

I am very pleased to say that the minister and the government responded positively to this request. The minister has brought in an amendment to Bill C-68 that adds a non-derogation clause to the bill. It reads like this:

For greater certainty, nothing in this act shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any existing aboriginal or treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

While the government's position is that the bill does not abrogate aboriginal and treaty rights, this non-derogation clause has been included in the bill to provide greater reassurance. I pushed for this amendment and I thank the Minister of Justice for responding.

The minister and the government have also made another very important change to Bill C-68. It is a change that I also pushed for and it affects the lending provisions of the bill.

When the bill was drafted initially, it stated that when someone loaned a firearm to another person the registration certificate for the firearm had to be loaned along with the firearm. I expressed my concerns to the minister about this provision. Both aboriginal and non-aboriginal groups who appeared before the justice committee also raised the lending provision as an issue. They talked about the impracticality of lending a registration certificate along with a firearm when someone is out on the land hunting for food.

Again, the minister and the government responded to the concern. The amendment made to the bill by the minister removes the requirement to transfer the registration certificate along with the firearm when the firearm is being loaned to someone who will be hunting for sustenance purposes.

This is a practical change. The government is acknowledging a way of life in rural and remote communities. Lending firearms is a common occurrence in the north, where I come from. Lending your firearm in the north is as common as lending a lawnmower to your neighbour or borrowing a cup of sugar from your neighbour in the southern parts of Canada. In northern communities, when your neighbour needs something you have in order to put food on the table, you help out in whatever way you can. Sometimes you lend your skidoo, sometimes gas, and sometimes your gun.

The change the minister has made to the lending provisions of the bill responds to the very real circumstances of all sustenance hunters, aboriginal and non-aboriginal. It is a positive change and I welcome it and I thank the minister for his consideration.

• (1220)

There are some other issues related to the bill that will need to be addressed and worked out between the federal government, the government of the Northwest Territories and aboriginal peoples.

The firearms safety training course has to recognize northern circumstances. In the north it must reflect and be adapted to the northern reality. Accommodation should be made for the aboriginal languages. I encourage both the federal and territorial governments to continue working on this matter.

The issue of traditional gun giving is also one I am sure will be addressed in discussions between government and aboriginal representatives.

I am confident these issues can be worked out satisfactorily. Reasonable people working together in a spirit of good will can sort these things out.

I support this bill. It is better now following the committee hearings and report stage. Many changes have been made to the bill to improve it.

I had some concerns, which the minister has gone a long way to address. Protections for the Inuit way of life are contained in the Nunavut land claims agreement and the Constitution of Canada. The bill contains a clause that says the government will discuss with Inuit how the bill is to be implemented in Inuit communities. Our communities will be able to have their own firearms officers. Sustenance hunting is recognized in the bill and we are doubly protected now with the addition of the clause that says that nothing in the bill can take away or limit aboriginal and treaty hunting rights.

I have never had any problem with the principles of this bill. I have no problem with gun registration. I am a hunter. I am an aboriginal hunter. I am not afraid of registering my firearms. I may experience some inconvenience with registration, but I support the principles underlying it.

The overriding objective of gun registration is public safety. I am prepared to do my part.

[English]

**The Speaker:** During the question and comment period I would ask if the hon. member would consider that in whatever official language the question is asked, he would consider answering in one of the official languages.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Nunatsiak for his comments.

I notice that he spent his time reassuring his constituents that the bill would not be too harsh on them. I know that even the use of his language was an effort to better communicate that to his constituents.