

they are fully aware of the law and the regulations. It is not only important for those applying the law and calling on citizens to account for their actions relative to the law, but it is very important for those who are affected by the law. Law enforcement agencies should be fully cognizant of their responsibilities under the law.

I do not think ignorance is an acceptable defence when a person is charged. I think of a young man who was driving along a highway. He had been driving that highway for a considerable number of years. He was stopped. A few days before, the speed limit on the highway had been reduced. It not only caused this person some inconvenience, but if I recollect correctly it cost him a fine of \$30. That was only a minor infraction. However, when dealing with the Criminal Code of Canada, the Minister of Justice and all concerned must ensure that the law is known by as wide a section of the population as possible under the circumstances.

This amendment, which requires that regulations made under this act be laid before this parliament within 15 days, is perfectly legitimate and reasonable. As has been pointed out, when regulations are presented to parliament for consideration and decision, it adds greatly to the knowledge of the law right across the country. The very fact that this subject is being debated will at least enable others to understand what it is we are considering here. I believe this is a very reasonable recommendation. All too often the government bypasses parliament. Indeed, the passing of orders in council has become a usual method of doing so. Even though the intention is to set out regulations, I would remind hon. members that regulations are an extremely important part of legislation.

● (1520)

The opposition has been complaining because on far too many occasions when legislation has been laid before the House, much of the detail is left to be regulated by order in council, with the result that we have no say, as representatives of the people, with regard to provisions which have an important bearing upon the laws we pass. I would, therefore, ask the Minister of Justice to accept the amendment moved by my hon. friend from Calgary North. We are not asking that all orders in council that are passed should be referred to parliament. This is one of the defences the minister has put forward: he has suggested it is not practicable for parliament to undertake responsibility for considering all orders in council. I must say, though, I think it might be a good idea, if time permitted. Realizing that this is not possible, we are asking that only those orders in council passed under the bill before us should be so referred to parliament for consideration.

As I said earlier, these arguments may have been placed before the House on other occasions, but I want to express my support for them in the hope that after repetition of these submissions the minister might finally accept the view of the opposition and make the legislation more palatable; or, perhaps I should say, less abrasive, since I do not think anything which might be done to the bill would make it palatable. But

at least it would not be such an imposition upon the citizens of Canada.

Criminal Code

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, these amendments go well together, because if you have one you may not need the other. If a public officer is designated, you probably would not need a regulation setting up the designation. In the absence of such designation it would obviously not be necessary to pass a regulation setting out who these people were going to be. I am sure there will be instances when the department might wish to make the factor of a Hudson's Bay post a peace officer for the purpose of this legislation. Or it might be the intention to appoint those who run radio or weather stations in some of our remote areas as peace officers for the purpose of this act. But if this is the case, we should say so specifically and spell out these intentions.

I see no reason why the government should not accept some of these very sensible amendments. It would seem reasonable, to me, that the government should let us know what it has in mind with regard to the delegation of authority. If gun clubs are to be given this authority, let the government say so. As long as this is done by regulation, without the public being told what the government has in mind the only persons who will know what the regulations are will be those authorized to perform these control functions. At some point, obviously, they will have to make this information available to the public with whom they are dealing, since otherwise the entire operation would fail.

The previous speaker said he did not see much reason for not agreeing with the government that not all regulations should be made public. Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of a regulation that should not be made public, if it involves people in their relationship with the government. There is, obviously, no point in putting it under a bushel some place. I know this is a poor metaphor, but it seems to me there is no reason to hide it.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): You are getting more biblical as you get older.

Mr. Peters: It is obvious that when you are making a regulation it should be known to those of the public who are concerned. The motion does not recommend that parliament has to approve. All we ask is that parliament should know of it. I believe that if parliament knew about these things, it might sometimes make a bit of a fuss and certain regulations to which objection was taken would be withdrawn or revised.

I cannot understand the minister's desire to designate these public officers by order in council and then express unwillingness to publish the regulations. It seems to me there is no great security aspect here. Surely it is not in the interest of national security that we should keep these regulations from the general public, since without public involvement the regulations will not mean a thing. It might well be that the regulations could be referred specifically to the statutory instruments committee. Maybe they should get them all and put out a public document