

*Private Members' Business*

I think that is a good place to stop but I assure the member that we will support this and hope that this bill goes into committee so we can deal with it in further detail.

[Translation]

**Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont):** Mr. Speaker, I must congratulate the hon. member for Don Valley North for her bill. It is excellent. This is an important bill intended to correct at least one of the major flaws in Bill C-17 on gun control by simply requiring that firearms acquired after the coming into force of this Act be registered in the owner's name.

Unfortunately, as we all know, the rules of this House allow only one hour for debate on this type of bill and whether or not it will actually be referred to a legislative committee for further consideration is up to the government to decide. I most sincerely wish for this bill to be allowed to go to committee.

Just having this debate is already a clear indication that the existing law is obviously failing to provide effective gun control. Perhaps I should remind the hon. members that it was the present Minister of National Defence and candidate in the Conservative Party leadership race who proudly moved Bill C-17 through Parliament when she was Minister of Justice.

Let us not forget either that the coalition for gun control, which is made up of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Police Association of Canada and many other justice and public health organizations, had estimated that this bill satisfied about 10 per cent of its demands.

We have seen what kind of regulations government has made since. The least we can say is that we were very disappointed and that the initial 10 per cent satisfaction rate would likely be much lower today. Let me give you an example. Did you know that the Ruger Mini-14 that was used in the massacre at the École Polytechnique has not even been included in the restricted firearms category? As things stand at the moment, we have no way of knowing how many people own a Ruger Mini-14 and who these people are. And there is no change in sight. Even a weapon like the AK-47 can still be sold today, although it has been classified as restricted, but you at least know who the owner is. Of course, Rambo's gun should have been completely banned.

• (1740)

In the case of the Ruger Mini-14, it can now be sold without having any idea of who owns such a firearm; in fact, we have no idea at all of who owns such firearms in Canada. This bill would at least correct this situation and in the short term, as some members mentioned, at least the semi-automatic weapons which were allowed in the regulations should absolutely be registered in the owners' names, so that they can be more easily traced if they are stolen or lost, and so that the police can identify the owners.

It is incredible; I was at the Polytechnique and I can tell you that you would not be able to distinguish between the weapon used there and an automatic one. To someone who heard the shots fired, it sounded like an automatic firearm. It is absolutely unbelievable that weapons such as that can still be sold today without knowing their owners, without a follow-up. As soon as you obtain a firearms acquisition certificate, you can buy as many of those firearms as you want, without ever having to undergo any control. Obviously, firearms kill many people. Some have said that it is not the firearms which kill, of course, but those who use them. However, we are well aware that where firearms are more restricted, where owners are more accountable, statistics show a significant reduction in the number of deaths caused by their use. People may be injured and there may not be any less violence, but violence with a knife or with fists hurts, while violence with a firearm kills.

Proportionally—hunters are 9 per cent of the population—when we look at the statistics, there are many more deaths due to firearms than to cars, for example.

Therefore, I am very pleased that this issue is being debated again today, now that we know the regulations which were adopted. As you know, Bill C-17 allowed the government to make regulations, to make a list of prohibited weapons, a list of restricted firearms, and a list of firearms which can be bought without any restriction. Obviously, when this bill was passed, nobody imagined that the AK-47 would still be allowed in Canada. This is incredible, because everybody thought that it would be prohibited. Everybody thought that a semi-automatic firearm such as the Ruger Mini-14 would be classified as a restricted weapon. Well, not so. Therefore, the whole issue of registration and control again becomes much more urgent.