

Assault weapons in Canada: are the dies already cast?

The beautiful tulips all over the lawns in the Capital City have not modified the grey sky of Ottawa that was reflected in the room of the Permanent Committee of the National and Public Security on 197 Sparks Street. In the presence of the Parliament Members who represented their political party affiliations, the Commission had convened us at 11h00 on May 22, 2018. We had to express our point of view on the coming Bill C-71, on the control of fire arms.



Assault weapons had not only been the main fire arms used in the recent mass shootings in the United States, but the same had taken place during the tragedies that we have known in Canada, such as at the Polytechnique in 1989, at the Dawson College in 2006, at the Metropolis in Montreal in 2012, without forgetting the massacre at the Mosque in Quebec City, last year.

In spite of the fact that 80% of Canadians, including the majority of fire arms owners, are in favor of a ban on the sale of assault weapons in Canada, the Bill C-71 does not consider this question. Clearly, in the words of the Minister of Public Security Ralph Goodale, another project different from the Bill C-71 will be presented to the Commons concerning the banishment of assault weapons.

“Please, please. Help us, do help us and help the society so that this kind of assault and war weapons, does not take place in this country. It is for the welfare of the whole society. This cry from the heart thrown by Boufeldja Benabdallah at the elect members may not have been useless.



[Daniel Thibeaut, journalist](#)

The lobby on fire arms in Canada is politically influenced. It seems that the deputies are flooded with messages coming from their sympathisers. What is most troubling is to realise that the public presupposes that our country is better protected than in the United States, as far as the sale of fire arms is concerned. Yet in the words of Helen Buzetti, in a long article published by the newspaper "Le Devoir" on May 4, to get a permit for a fire arm is amazingly easy. The authorities are confident in the good faith of the applicants and cross their fingers while hoping that the doctors will signal those at risk.

Indeed, it is legally possible to buy in our country an assault weapon of the military type without restriction, that is to say, without the possibility of tracing the owners. The bill C-71 does not reach this precise goal but deals only with technical and secondary considerations such as the role of the National Police Force and the enforcement of the Law.

Ironically, at the same time as the debate is being held, according to an article published by Olivier Robichaud in the Huffpost of May 23, the Police Service of both the cities of Laval and Longueuil is about to offer some assault weapons to their patrol units. This does not seem to be the case yet for the SPVM in Montreal where only the groups of tactical interventions have in their possession about forty.

Are we about to create a social psychosis like the one in the States? The danger increases with the use of tobacco, it is well known. The proliferation of fire arms of the military type is not good news for the Canadians, including conscientious honest owners of fire arms, responsible for the handling of their own arms and respectful of the laws. These use their fire arms for game hunting!

This does not stand to reason, in this issue. The question of having access to assault weapons is not restricted to the militaries. It is quite simple! What does prevent us as a society that longs for a life of security to outlaw the free sale of war weapons? It is certainly not the proliferation of these arms that will assure a greater protection of our citizens. The example of our American neighbours is enough.

Without being too much aware of it, we are witnessing a slow and cunning form of social acceptability of the free sale of assault weapons without any means of control.



Representatives : Heidi Rathjen, Coordinator of PolySeSouvient, Michel LeRoux, father of police Thierry LeRoux killed at Lac-Simon, Boufeldja Banabdallah, President et Cofounder of the Islamic Cultural Centre in Quebec, Nizar Ghali et Mohamed Khabar, survivors of the shooting at the Mosque of Quebec, Nathalie Provost, survivor of the 6th December 1989 shooting at the Polytechnic, Serge St-Arneault, brother of Annie St-Arneault killed at the Polytechnic of Montreal, Alison Irons, mother of Lindsay who was killed by fire arm at Bracebridge, Ontario, in Avril 2013, Manuel Klassen, President of the Student Association of the Polytechnic, Wendy Vasquez, President of the Confederation for the Promotion of Students in engineering of Quebec, Jade Karim, Coordinator for the mobilisation of the Student union in Quebec, Alexandra Laberge, Representative of the Women Federation of Quebec (video conference), H  l  ne Thibault, graduate of Polytechnic and member of PolySeSouvient, J  r  me Goudreault, Director of the Quebec Association for the prevention of suicide, and many other students from the Polytechnic of Montreal.