

So, I hope, Mr. Chairman, in its consideration of the matter before this committee, this committee will give very careful thought to this section. I speak as one who has long supported civil rights legislation. I have voted for all of it since 1955. I have been one of the framers of the discharge petition that brought civil rights legislation to the floor. I have suffered politically in my district for the support of this, and it has had a major effect in some of the campaigns. I do not speak as an opponent of the bill, but as one who is concerned about having good legislation on the floor for the House to consider and work its will in the public interest.

I believe there is need for legislation to attack the problem of civil disorder and control the traffic of firearms, which are a problem in connection with riots. But I am not satisfied that the provision that you see before you, drafted in haste on the Senate floor, is necessarily the best device to protect our people from the hazard of riot and hazard of unwise use of firearms in the course of riots.

Thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. COLMER. Thank you.

Mr. Dingell, I have known of your interest in this subject matter of firearms, as many of your colleagues have, for a number of years.

I think it is something that concerns all of us. There are two sides to the coin as usual, and here involved is the right, as I understand it, to own and enjoy the use of firearms for peaceful purposes.

Now, you made a very good statement, say that you wanted this committee to give serious consideration to this provision of the bill; as you say, it was hastily adopted on the floor of the other body.

Of course, the gentleman has been around a long time and he, I am sure, is aware of the fact that this committee cannot amend this bill. It cannot take anything away from it. It cannot add anything to it.

It is a question of how, and when, and if, it goes to the floor for consideration.

Now, of course, the gentleman also is aware of the fact that if the resolution that has been introduced here, and which is now under consideration, were reported out without any amendment and, of course, that resolution can be amended, neither the gentleman from Michigan, nor anyone else could offer an amendment on the floor to clarify this matter, or strike it, or do anything else about it.

In other words, the membership of the House, under the resolution pending here would be put in a straitjacket so far as this division of the bill is concerned, along with all other provisions of the bill.

I am sure that the gentleman does not look with favor upon that type of legislation. So, and I have no desire to put words in the mouth of the gentleman or in any way embarrass him, but since he has taken the time to come up here and give us the benefit of his voice on this matter, I would take it that he would not be in favor of reporting this straitjacket resolution to which I have just referred.

Mr. DINGELL. My personal preferences are that this matter should be considered under circumstances where the bill can be perfected.

I think there is no good reason to think that either by referring this matter to the Judiciary Committee from whence it originally came, or by referring it to a conference, that the objectionable features like this can be eliminated without hazard to the fundamental piece of legislation itself.