

proposal was a "reasonable alternative" to a ban on all semi-automatic firearms proposed by many after the massacre at the Ecole Polytechnique. She added: "This effectively restricts firepower without denying Canadians access to semi-automatics..."

The Committee's recommendation guts the Minister's proposal. Instead of the "5 and 10" suggestion, limits are increased to 10 for centre-fire semi-automatic cartridges and 20 for competition shooters. There would be no limits at all for "genuine gun collectors."

I oppose this recommendation. The Committee argued that the limit of 5 on semi-automatic rifles would affect rifles with built-in magazines of a capacity over 5. It was argued that these guns could not be altered and would become effectively prohibited.

Evidence presented to the Committee however, suggested that in 1991 of approximately 2600 different makes and models of weapons only 28 would be affected. 26 of these guns are in the para-military class and would be prohibited or restricted by the law in any event. Thus, of 2600 guns, only two - versions of the Marlin Camp Carbine - are affected. For this, the Committee guts a crucial element of the Minister's gun control package?

The 847,000 Person Loophole

The Special Committee's proposal for a new FAC system makes a strong distinction between first-time applicants and renewals. First-time applicants must provide two references, pay \$50, fulfill a competency requirement, face vigorous screening provisions and are subject to a 28 day "cooling off period". None of these conditions apply to FAC renewals.

Under this proposed FAC system, individuals who have an FAC under the present system will be treated as renewals. The result is that all present FAC owners, some 847,000 people, will never be subject to the competency or references provisions. This is a loophole in the system of astonishing proportions.

All applicants for an FAC must meet the competency and reference requirements. Only after they have passed them the first time should things get easier upon renewal.

FAC Cost and Screening

The Special Committee recommends a fee of \$50 for first-time applicants and \$10 for renewals. The current firearms control system runs an annual deficit of 3 million dollars. I believe that the user-pay principle must be applied to the FAC process. Any fee structure should be adequate to cover the costs of the programme.