

6. AMMUNITION

It was suggested by a number of witnesses who appeared before the Special Committee that another method of ensuring public safety with respect to firearms use would be to regulate the sale of ammunition under the Criminal Code. In particular, the Canadian Police Association, among others, proposed that FACs be produced, verified and recorded in every transaction involving the purchase of ammunition. In this way, it was argued, it would become increasingly difficult for criminals to obtain ammunition for stolen firearms.

Various other witnesses, however, including the Chief Provincial Firearms Officers, pointed out that screening the sale of ammunition by way of an FAC requirement would be both unworkable and unenforceable. The Dominion of Canada Rifle Association and the British Columbia Wildlife Federation argued that such a requirement would fundamentally alter the present FAC system. The proposal would immediately require present owners of firearms who do not have FACs to go through the entire screening process in order to acquire any further ammunition for their guns. This would make the FAC into a possession permit which all firearms owners would require, rather than purely a permit to acquire new firearms. Finally, the Chief Provincial Firearms Officers summed up the problem as ultimately one of enforcement. Ammunition is not traceable. Not only is there no room for identification, but its bench life is very long.

The Special Committee has recommended a strengthened system for controlling access to firearms, and we believe that this is the best method of ensuring responsible and safe firearms ownership.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Special Committee recommends against the proposal that an FAC be required to purchase ammunition. The Committee believes that the problems inherent in implementing such a system would make it unworkable. The Committee further believes that its strengthened FAC package will be more effective in regulating firearms use in the interests of public safety.

7. REVOCATION

Bill C-80 would add to section 112 of the Criminal Code the power for a firearms officer to revoke an FAC where he or she has notice of information indicating that such action is desirable in the interests of the safety of the FAC-holder or anyone else. Section 112 now applies to the revocation of restricted weapon registration certificates and similar permits. The full right of appeal already available under section 112 would apply equally to those persons who felt aggrieved by an FAC revocation. According to the government, the implementation of this provision is in response to situations in which police have seized firearms, only to have the owner commit a crime with a new firearm acquired using his or her existing FAC.

While the Special Committee accepts that there will be instances where the revocation of an FAC is necessary, it is sensitive to the concerns expressed by firearms owners who appeared before it that a revocation provision places too much power in the hands of a peace officer. Instead, it was