

5. MULTI-LEVEL TRAINING SYSTEMS

Witnesses from different perspectives recommended that competency training and knowledge be linked to particular types of firearms as an element of controlling both the access and use of guns. Several firearms users recommended that a regime of multi-level training be implemented to control access to particular firearms. This was often referred to as the "Graded FAC" approach, as it would involve more than one level of training under the proposed strengthened FAC system for basic access to different types of firearms.

Some of the proposed systems had only 2 levels — one for initial access to single-shot firearms, and a second for access to any kind of semi-automatic. Others had multiple levels, and these depended either on the type of firearm sought, or on the purpose for which the firearm was sought. Some of the proposed systems attempted to combine both factors — the type of firearm involved and the purpose for which it would be owned or used — in the creation of different training requirements. Mr. John Vaughan of the Alberta Federation of Shooting Sports compared the concept to the approach now taken to driver's licenses, in which a certain degree of competency must be demonstrated depending on the required use for the licence.

While the Special Committee recognizes that the concept of a graduated licensing system, with different levels of training dependent on the type of firearm and the activity to which it relates, has a certain appeal and may warrant further consideration, the Committee does not feel that such an approach would be feasible at this time. There are two principal difficulties inherent in the proposal. The first is that it would be difficult to design a training system which took account of both the type of firearm involved and the nature of the activities in which the person seeking access would engage. Instead, it is the opinion of the Special Committee that controls on both firearms and activities should be carefully considered by the Canadian Advisory Council on Firearms, as recommended later in the report, and then dealt with on the basis of the Committee's proposed method of categorizing firearms as set out in a subsequent chapter.

The second principal problem with a graduated licensing system is the enormous amount of work involved in developing the necessary infrastructure to provide even basic training for all FAC applicants. Mr. William McKittrick, the Ontario Hunter Education Coordinator, cited the problem of the availability of ranges, particularly in urban areas, for live firing training of would-be firearms users.

The single level of training which we are recommending should err on the side of being stricter if that appears to be required. When that system is in place, the Advisory Council should evaluate it and consider whether further refinements and developments are necessary.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Special Committee recommends that only a single level of training be developed as part of the FAC process, and that this single level of training be as comprehensive as necessary to deal with all firearms.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Special Committee recommends that when the training requirement which we recommend is fully implemented, the Canadian Advisory Council on Firearms monitor its development.