

the application is complete. The applicant's name is then checked against local and provincial indices and on the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) computer, which maintains central criminal records covering all of Canada.

When an FAC application is received from a person who has not been a local resident for the previous 5 years, the firearms officer should make an index check of the applicant with the relevant local and provincial police agencies before issuing the FAC. These checks should cover at least the five-year period referred to earlier. International records must also be reviewed in instances where the applicant is from another country. The firearms officer may contact or interview the applicant on any matter which requires clarification. For example, any doubts as to the validity of the applicant's claim to be a hunter or trapper, when a sustenance permit is being applied for, must be verified.

According to representatives of the firearms community who appeared before the Special Committee, these federally recommended screening procedures are adapted by each province and territory in accordance with its own policies, and further adapted in some cases by the local firearms officer to take account of local policies and circumstances. This has led to significant inconsistencies in the interpretation and application across the country of these and other firearms control provisions. Even the Chief Provincial Firearms Officers who appeared before the Special Committee acknowledged a lack of uniformity in firearms administration both within and between provinces. The Committee recognizes this general problem of lack of uniformity and has made recommendations later in this report in that regard.

The Special Committee was disturbed by evidence that there is not at present a uniform nation-wide screening process being applied to FAC applicants. While a certain amount of administrative discretion is inevitable in any system, those basic procedures flowing from the requirements of the Criminal Code and described in the Firearms Manual must be consistently applied across the country. These recommended basic screening mechanisms are minimal at best, and must be maintained and strictly enforced.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Special Committee recommends that the present procedures set out in the R.C.M.P. National Firearms Manual for screening FAC applicants be applied uniformly by every firearms officer across Canada, and that this application be strictly enforced.

ii) Bill C-80 Proposal

Bill C-80 would make a number of changes to the requirements for obtaining an FAC. The proposed process would require all FACs to bear the holder's photograph in an attempt to reduce the potential for unauthorized or fraudulent use of FACs. The bill would also require an applicant to furnish the names of two persons who have known him or her for at least 3 years, and who could confirm that the information submitted with the application was true.

It is the expressed intention of the government that these references will be chosen from a list of occupations or professions to be prescribed by regulation; however, such a list will take into consideration those occupations and professions with a long-term residency in the community and