

All universities and colleges are publicly supported.

The provinces have jurisdiction over education and set student fees. University students pay about 20 per cent of the costs of their education through tuition fees, which average \$2,500 per year. Most of the rest is paid for by tax dollars. The federal government pays roughly half the costs of post-secondary education, about \$8 billion per year, mostly through cash grants and tax transfers to the provinces.

The discussion paper proposes shifting

more of the costs of post-secondary education to the students who benefit directly by putting a portion of the money the federal government transfers to the provinces towards an expanded student loan program. Repayment schedules would be tied to income after graduation. Other proposals are aimed at making education more accessible for people throughout their careers to help them upgrade their skills and respond to a changing economy. One such option would allow people to withdraw money for education and training from tax-

deferred Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs).

The Process of Reform

Using the discussion paper as a focus for debate, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources Development is conducting public hearings in every province and territory. After the committee issues its report in early 1995, the federal government will begin negotiations with the provinces, leading to the introduction of legislation in Parliament.

STRENGTHENING GUN CONTROL

On November 30, Justice Minister and Solicitor General Allan Rock announced a new firearms control program that will require registration of all guns, ban all assault rifles and many handguns, impose harsher penalties on those who use guns to commit crimes and crack down on smuggling.

"Canadians believe strongly that they do not want a country in which people feel they must own a firearm to protect themselves," Mr. Rock told Parliament. "Canadians want, above all, to have a lawful and safe society in which the criminal misuse of firearms is dealt with severely."

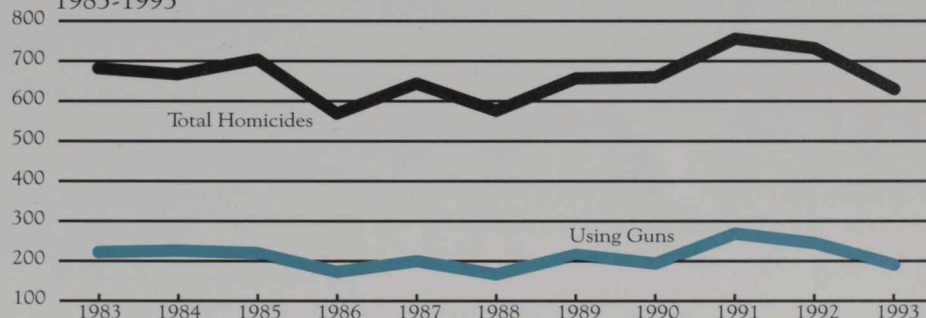
The new gun control package follows a thorough review of existing laws and an extensive period of consultation with Canadians across the country. The government will introduce legislation to implement the plan when Parliament reopens in February.

Mr. Rock said the plan was developed in response to a disturbing trend towards violence by firearms. Five Canadians a week are victims of homicide by firearms, he said, and one woman is shot to death every six days, usually in the home.

The current gun control system prohibits some firearms such as fully automatic weapons and sawed-off shotguns, and restricts others, including all handguns, that must be registered. Long guns such as rifles and shotguns used for hunting are not restricted. Some 1.2 million guns in Canada are registered, out of an estimated total of 6 million.

The "foundation for all the (gun control) strategies we will undertake," Mr. Rock told Parliament, is mandatory registration of all firearms and their owners on a new national computer system. In order to encourage registration, which will begin on January 1, 1996, fees will initially be under \$10 and owners will have a grace period of several years in which to register. The Royal Canadian

Homicides and Guns in Canada 1983-1993



Between 1983 and 1993, guns were used in an average of 31.6 per cent of homicides in Canada.
Source: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

Mounted Police will run the system, which is being developed in cooperation with provincial governments and local police forces. The registration system will be used to control sales of ammunition and enforce prohibition court orders related to domestic violence.

The new laws will severely curtail the number and types of handguns available for sale in Canada. "We start from the principle that only those firearms that we agree as a country are appropriate for legitimate purposes should be available for private ownership," Mr. Rock said. Effective January 1, 1995, the importation and sale of handguns that have no legitimate sporting purpose is prohibited. These include all .25 and .32 calibre handguns and those with a barrel length of 4.14 inches or less, which account for almost 60 per cent of the handguns now on the market. To keep or acquire handguns, private citizens must demonstrate every five years that they have one of two legitimate reasons for owning one: as part of a collection or to be used for target practice.

The gun control program bans 21 types (over 200 individual models) of military and paramilitary rifles. There are almost 19,000 currently registered in Canada. Owners of military rifles registered as of January 1, 1995, will be allowed to keep them over their

lifetimes but may not sell or bequeath them. A number of recent-model assault weapons are banned outright and should have been turned over to police by January 1.

Hunting rifles and shotguns will not be restricted (although they must be registered) because, Mr. Rock said, "Canadians want our firearms laws to acknowledge and respect the legitimate interests of hunters and of farmers."

To balance the restrictions on gun ownership, criminal sanctions will be created or strengthened against 10 violent crimes. A new mandatory minimum sentence of four years in prison and a lifetime prohibition on possessing restricted firearms will be imposed on anyone who uses a firearm to commit robbery, attempted murder, kidnapping, manslaughter, sexual assault and five other crimes. There will also be mandatory minimum sentences for possession of a stolen weapon and possession of a loaded restricted weapon without a permit.

Stiffer penalties, up to 10 years' imprisonment, will be imposed upon gun smugglers. Border control will be tightened with improved enforcement, more inspections and permit requirements for cross-border shipments of firearms.