

Second, the Canadian Advisory Council need not be transformed into a C.R.T.C. of guns asked to pass judgement on every new gun that comes into Canada. We do not require a new firearms bureaucracy. Rather, what is required are clearly defined provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with firearms. Such provisions must be easy for gun owners to understand and firearms officers to enforce.

Women and Guns

Several witnesses before the Special Committee noted that women have a different attitude toward guns than do men. Women own only a small percentage of guns in Canada and commit only a tiny percentage of gun related crimes. While women commit less than 5% of firearms homicides, they are the victim in 30-40% of such cases.

The Ecole Polytechnique massacre focussed attention on the issue of firearms and violence against women. The issue is hardly a new one for Canadian women. Sixty per cent of all female homicide victims are killed within a family context. Shooting was the most common cause of death in these cases. Most often, rifles and shotguns were used.

No one suggests that firearms legislation alone is the answer to the problem of violence against women in our society. It is, however part of the solution. Women's voices must be heard in this debate.

Native Issues

Many native people depend on wildlife harvesting for their livelihood and cultural expression. Existing case law (Sparrow vs. the Queen on fishing) recognizes their historical and treaty rights based on aboriginal title and occupancy. I believe the federal government is constitutionally bound to consult native people with respect to a gun control regime.

Conclusion

It is possible to enact more effective firearms control but it takes political will.

The Special Committee's report is good when it deals with such issues as safe storage, definition of genuine gun collector and safety courses. However, on the main issue of Bill C-80, it dilutes radically the legislation. It's a recipe for non-action.