

Gun control

The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, (BATF) is at it again. In a column appearing in this issue, Senator Ted Stevens discusses BATF's latest move.

Last year the BATF sponsored a centralized gun registration scheme which could be achieved by \$5-7 million according to them. However, the proposed monitoring of the 11 million firearms transactions in the U.S. each year could have cost taxpayers \$50 million. That money, if it had been approved, would have been better utilized in putting criminals who commit felonies behind bars rather than penalizing law-abiding firearm owners.

The Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. considered this gun registration attempt, possibly leading to gun confiscation, serious enough to adopt the following policy statement during May 1978:

"The Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc., strongly supports the Second Amendment right of all American citizens to keep and bear arms. We do not support any federal gun registration nor state infringement on this constitutional right.

Many Alaska Natives rely heavily on subsistence heritage to supplement their way and means of life. Firearms are an integral part of the Native lifestyle and cultural hunting background.

Increasing the current firearm restrictions will only hunder the American people with additional laws restricting their freedom and act as a further tax burden."

On January 1, 1979, Canada enacted more gun control by establishing their Firearm Acquisition Certificate System. The certificate is a document that persons over the age of 16 must have before being allowed to buy, borrow or otherwise obtain a firearm. This certificate is valid for a five-year period at a cost of \$10.00.

The U.S. already has a similar system in effect for firearm purchasers. In addition, ammunition that can be used in hand guns has to be signed for and your address and drivers license number recorded. Firearm purchasers must include this plus answer a list of questions such as: are you a drug user, have you committed any felonies, are you a member of an organization who advocates overthrow of our government, etc. The BATF wants more regulations, if this isn't infringement of the Second Amendment, what is? Criminals wouldn't answer the above questions truthfully anyway, it's just more harassment for law abiding citizens.

The Second Amendment Right to Keep and Bear Arms must be guarded carefully by Alaska Natives and rural residents to maintain their subsistence way of life. The Nation's sport hunters, despite the competition for game, other gun owners, the National Rifle Association and related industry are valuable allies in this struggle.

By June of 1978, the BATF had received over 200,000 letters from concerned gun owners protesting the planned central gun registration scheme. The BATF lost this one but haven't given up.

The federal and state government may well provide for subsistence hunting but conversely could gain control of firearms through legislation. Subsistence could effectively be legislated out of existence, except for those knowledgeable and able enough to return to the old ways.