

gophers, who do not shoot gophers at all but who keep them in an apartment and carry them around on Saturday nights either to show off or to use them as a weapon in a robbery or something of that kind.

Now, in the draft statutes, submitted by the Commissioners, there was an effort to set up a standard which distinguished between responsible citizens and irresponsible citizens, and it set up, I think, a pretty good standard.

Senator DOMINICK. How do you tell until after the fact?

Mr. ACHESON. Well, you cannot, but by putting it on the basis of the likelihood of the responsibility of the citizen, in view of his employment, his medical record, his education, his age, family, circumstances, you can get some guidelines whether it is a stable situation in which a gun may safely be left in his home or whether it is an unstable situation where it might not be safe.

And in the one case the police or the Commissioner, under that, would deny a license and in the other case he would grant a license.

Now, we made every effort in that bill to make it easy for responsible people to keep handguns.

We made it mandatory upon the Commissioners to grant a license if those statutory criteria were satisfied.

And to me it is a bit like the question of requiring licenses for the operation of automobiles. Automobiles are dangerous. Guns are dangerous.

You require a license to drive an automobile. Now, this is a very considerable inconvenience for people to get. They have got to take a driving test and they have to fill out a form and they have to pay \$3.

In a sense, it discriminates against law-abiding citizens because they comply with it and other people who are not law-abiding get in a car and drive it around without a license.

But the thing you accomplish is that if you catch a person doing that and he does not have a license, you have a criminal charge against him.

Now, this is some deterrent to crime. It also takes him out of circulation for a while.

And in the case of illegal possession of handguns, I do not see why we should not approach it in much the same way.

Senator DOMINICK. In effect then, you feel that this might have some merit?

Mr. ACHESON. That sums it up very accurately, Senator.

I think it might have some merit.

The CHAIRMAN. Any further questions?

Senator DOMINICK. No.

The CHAIRMAN. I might say to my friend from Colorado that as we get into this firearms problem I would certainly propose to have some of the experts come in on the workings of the Sullivan law.

We have had all kinds of conflicts of opinion. We intend to have some law enforcement experts to give us their best judgments on that.

Mr. ACHESON. If I could say just one thing on that, Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN. Certainly.

Mr. ACHESON. I think the draft bill that was submitted is a fairer law to the citizenry than the Sullivan law.