

Mr. Dowdy. I might say this, last year this Committee reported the anti-crime bill (P.L. 90-226, approved Dec. 27, 1967) which was passed by the House, and subsequently it became law. In that bill, we, this Committee and the House, approved a provision which fixed and made mandatory, additional sentence for crimes committed with a gun. For several years, the Senate wouldn't go along with it and it was opposed by the Justice Department. That is the only reason the mandatory feature was not put in the law as you mentioned earlier, which we have now put into the gun bill (P.L. 90-351, approved June 19, 1968) the Poff-Casey amendment. But I did want you to know that this committee has held that view all the time, that I have had it all the time, and when the opportunity has presented itself, I have always urged the fixing of a minimum sentence by law. We several times reported bills fixing the minimum sentences, which passed the House, but always over the opposition of the Justice Department.

You mentioned the City Council's gun law, the gun ordinance. I have this opinion about these proposals for gun registration, of course it will not stop crime. But the people of the United States, not only the District of Columbia, are disturbed about the crime and riots and looting going on in the country and are very open about their opposition to that sort of thing; I think these gun laws are proposed as a smoke screen to get the people's minds off crime and so on and to get them to talking about guns and forget about the real problem. You know if you can get people off something that is bothering them and get them on to something that is really immaterial it will be good politics to divert their thoughts by promoting this anti-gun measure and try to persuade people that passing a gun law will stop crime. I don't think it will go, because the idea is ridiculous. The American people are not that gullible.

Mr. Machen?

Mr. MACHEN. I would just like to compliment Mrs. Abbott on a very thoughtful, fair statement, and I am satisfied that it is the voice of the police because it takes the wife to do the talking before a Committee.

Mrs. ABBOTT. I am sure it is true.

Mr. MACHEN. And the difficult position that you all have in backing up your husbands in their chosen field of endeavor makes it rather rough, but I think that the overwhelming majority of the citizens of the District of Columbia are behind just what you have stated, a fair and impartial and effective enforcement of the law against any perpetrator of a crime. I think we get that message loud and clear, and if we do things will start changing.

Mrs. ABBOTT. I sure hope so.

Mr. MACHEN. I think we hear too much about this community relationship and perhaps I might add, to me I think one of the most effective programs we have had in the District for many years has been the Police Boys Club and I think they still continue to carry on very effectively with community relations with Boy's Clubs activities, do they not, Mrs. Abbott?

Mrs. ABBOTT. Yes, they do, but then there is a problem there, too, Congressman. Most of the men are working six days a week because of the crime problem. In addition to that they are attending American University classes maybe two, three nights a week; they are at-