

regional viewpoint

By Jim Irving

News item: Justice Minister Ronald Basford brought out his proposed new — and softened — gun control legislation yesterday and said anyone who didn't like it had better speak up.

The new regulations to be considered by Parliament — earlier proposals died on the order paper last year — would require those buying or borrowing firearms to have a certificate in most cases but would not require a guarantor as had been suggested a year ago.



sharon's sunshine

By Sharon Brain

Wednesday afternoon, two strong men with a truck and a lot of know-how dragged an enormous old piano into my dining room.

This piano left that very room about two years ago when we moved in. I thought then there wasn't room for all of us. But I see I was wrong.

There is always room for a piano. We will just have to start eating in the kitchen.

Pianos are quite a responsibility, not to be taken on lightly. Any one who has ever tried to move one knows this.

I regard this step in our lives as a sign we are ready to take on the burdens of adulthood, and truly settle down.

Travelling piano

We didn't always feel this way. That's why this particular piano is so well travelled.

Person A, who owns the piano, moved from home to an apartment years ago. She had neither the room, nor the muscles, nor the maturity, to take her piano with her.

So she left it with Person B, the landlady. But when we moved in, we refused to keep it. I said I would rather have a sofa than a piano.

So Landlady B passed it on to the Relative C on the condition Owner A could have it back when she wished.

Relative C refinished the piano with loving care and signed her kids up for piano lessons.

Owner A kept getting telephone calls from these budding musicians asking her when in heaven's name she was going to take her piano back.

Then Grandfather D had to give up housekeeping and gave his lovely piano to Relative C.

2 pianos fight

Now everyone knows you can't keep two pianos in one house.

First of all, they fight. Second, no one wants to have to stand up all the time just so there are instruments available for friends to play duets of Chopsticks at parties.

Owner A still didn't have a house. So the piano was loaned to Stranger E.

Three more kids were pressed into the piano school of their choice.

There were three very happy people in the house when we finished our addition. The piano came home at last.

Mind you, the piano doesn't belong to us. We are merely holding it in trust for Owner A.

If you know a nice man who wants a good woman with a bad piano, I can help.

You see, this piano knows it has been rejected by a whole string of people.

It doesn't feel particularly good about it.

It shows it too. For example, it refuses to play either A or B flat.

Now, that doesn't seem too bad. It's only two notes out of a possible 88.

But there aren't many pieces around that don't suffer from the lack of those two notes. Choosing your piece carefully becomes a very important part of the recital.

I annoy piano

The piano seems to be particularly annoyed at me. I don't blame it. I was the one who gave it the toe.

I was the one who said if I was going to have a piano taking up one-quarter of my living space, it wouldn't be an old wreck like that.

But I said those things before I had priced new pianos.

Freedom for gunmen!

(The main difference from the law proposed earlier was it wouldn't require the three million rifle and shotgun owners in Canada to get a fitness certificate signed by two guarantors.)

I was sitting at home the other day sawing off the barrel of my shotgun, when it suddenly exploded into action, blowing off the wig of my grandmother, who was over in the corner doing pushups.

It gave me a bit of a start, as I had been planning to knock over a milk store that night and now I was faced with the problem of carrying a hair trigger gun down my pant leg and risking the possibility of being jostled in the subway. I could be severely injured.

What to do? I asked my grandmother if she would

mind doing her exercises elsewhere, and then I opened my gun and took out the spent shell. Must remember not to be so careless about this. Working with a loaded gun was bad; it could have been me who was hit.

Sawed-off barrel

I finished sawing off the barrel so it was just long enough to tuck under my belt and not be too obvious under my jacket. I liked that jacket, its bright yellow color removed that brooding look from my eyes, so I assumed a friendlier stare, that of a guy who was going into a store for groceries and not to clean out the till.

It's important to look nice when you do that sort of thing; the image is all. The last thing you want when you're a thug, is to look like one.

I decided to wear my black pants, so the rifle butt wouldn't be too noticeable if it stuck out a bit, and then I got out a file from my filing cabinet and smoothed down some of the rough spots on the gun barrel.

That was better, no danger of cutting my self now. It was as smooth as old Basford's dome.

I got out two more shells from my cuff link box and fingered them gently. What well organized little mechanisms they were; to think that so much power could be stored in those two cardboard containers, as harmless looking as a roll of dimes.

I got a little giddy just looking at them, as I pondered whether I should put them in the gun right then, or wait until just before I went into the store. So to calm myself I went over to the desk and sniffed a little glue from the back of a stamp — one of those big, air mail ones — and started to feel better.

Murderous anticipation

In fact, I was really looking forward to the outing.

Maybe someone would even try to give me a bad time and I could test that hair trigger; see how good the guy was at doing a soft shoe.

In a quick burst of decision, I grabbed the gun, opened the breach, shoved in the two shells, put the safety on and slipped the gun down inside my pant leg.

I was as ready as I would ever be. No, not quite, I had to make sure just exactly where that store was, so I got out my map of the city. I wanted a place in the other end of town, to lessen the chances of ever being spotted again.

After finding the area I wanted, I put the map back on the shelf and started out the door. Then I realized I didn't have subway fare and called to my grandmother.

I hardly recognized her when she came in, resplendent in a new, bright red wig. I had to admit it looked good with her fireman's overalls and platform soles.

She gave me a dollar and I took off, feeling a bit high, and flushed with the sense of adventure ahead of me.

Gun brushing leg

I walked down the street, feeling the gun brushing against my leg, tenderly, caressingly.

It was good to live in a free society where a man could do what he wanted; where he didn't always have to be bothered with a lot of silly rules if he wanted to live his own life.

In fact, there sometimes what rules there were even encouraged him to keep doing it all his own way, just when he thought they might finally be catching up to him.

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Rejected, dejected am I and my piano

Still, I wish it wouldn't hold a grudge. I wish it wouldn't play wrong notes so often.

I wish it wouldn't stop dead in the middle of pieces just when everyone decides to sing along.

I wish it wouldn't fight me every inch of the way. Last night the landlord told me he particularly enjoyed my rendition of Sixteen Tons.

I was playing King of the Road.

I didn't think he was funny. Neither did he.

My husband says at least it has cut down on my singing. He feels that alone is worth the price of two pianos.

He also agreed with his father about Sixteen Tons. Some families have no ear for music.

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