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SELECTED FIREARMS. STATISTICS

-CANADA-

NO. 1986-42

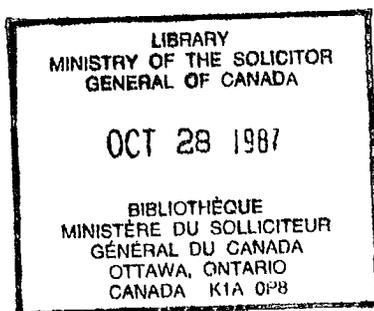
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Canada, Ministry of the Solicitor General, Statistics Division //



SELECTED FIREARMS, STATISTICS

-CANADA-

NO. 1986-42

This working paper was prepared by the Statistics Division, Programs Branch, Ministry of the Solicitor General. The views expressed are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada.

SUMMARY

This report provides statistical information on selected data and trends related to firearms ownership and use in Canada.

TRENDS IN SELECTED FIREARM INCIDENTS

Homicide

- The rate of firearm homicides has been declining since 1976.
- The proportion of homicides involving firearms has declined since 1978.

Robbery

- An increase in the rate of all types of robbery was observed in 1979. The rate of firearm robberies has subsequently decreased slightly to below 1978 levels.
- The proportion of robberies involving a firearm has declined to an all-time low in 1984.
- The rate of increase in firearm robberies has not been as great as that of all robberies.

Suicide

- Immediately following 1978 there was a sharp drop in the rate of firearm suicide. This rate has since shown an increasing trend, although it has not reached 1978 levels.

Accidents

- The incidence of accidents involving firearms has decreased each year since 1974.

ADMINISTRATION OF FIREARMS LEGISLATION

Firearm Acquisition Certificates

- The number of FAC's issued has declined over the years, most likely because these certificates are valid for a five year period.
- Regional differences were quite evident: Northwest Territories, Yukon, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, and Alberta rating relatively high on a per capita basis of FAC's issued.
- The number of **minor's permits** issued has remained fairly constant.

Restricted Weapons

- The number of restricted weapons registered each year has been fairly constant.
- The total number of registered weapons in Canada has increased moderately since 1978.

Permits

- **Permits to carry** have increased since 1978. Again, regional differences were observed, western provinces showing a higher issuance of such permits.
- **Permits to transport** have also increased since 1979. The western provinces and territories had the highest rates of these permits issued.

Business Permits

- The total number of permits issued to businesses dealing in non-restricted weapons has decreased almost by one half since 1979.
- The number of permits issued to businesses dealing in both restricted and non-restricted weapons has remained fairly constant.

Prohibitions

- The number of persons prohibited from possessing firearms has increased significantly since 1980. Western provinces and the Territories had the highest rates of prohibition.

Missing and Recovered Firearms

- The cumulative totals of firearms recorded as missing and recovered since 1974 have been increasing moderately each year.

INTRODUCTION

Gun control legislation, implementation, and regulation have been ongoing processes in Canada since the 19th Century. Over this time, firearm laws have developed from extremely selective prohibition and permit systems to the more encompassing legislation most recently enacted in 1977. Most of this recent legislation dealing with firearms control came into effect January 1, 1978 with the remaining sections pertaining to firearm acquisition certificates and business permits coming into force January 1, 1979.

The major goal was to "reduce the number of incidents involving firearms", through the following objectives:

- to reduce access to firearms by potentially dangerous and irresponsible users;
- to reduce or discourage the criminal usage of firearms; and
- to encourage responsible ownership, handling, storage, and usage of firearms (Scarff, Zarachuk, Jacques and McAuley, 1981)

A three-year evaluation of the firearms legislation was completed in 1983 (Scarff, 1983). The principal findings with respect to the impact of the legislation on criminal incidents indicated a decline in the proportion of violent crimes involving firearms and concurrently a moderate displacement of firearms by other weapons for some offences (robbery). The number of non-criminal incidents involving firearms also declined over the evaluation period. While that paper provides the most exhaustive analysis and evaluation of the firearms legislation its findings are based on a relatively short period (1978-1981).

The present report provides statistical information on data and trends related to firearms use in Canada from 1974 to 1985.

DATA SOURCES AND LIMITATIONS

Data were collected by province, and nationally, from various RCMP and Statistics Canada reports for the period 1969 to 1984. Not all data elements were available for all years. For example, most firearms data were not collected by the RCMP prior to 1978.

Data on crimes involving firearms (homicide and robbery) and deaths involving firearms (suicide and accidental) were obtained from the Statistics Canada publications, Canadian Crime Statistics (catalogue 85-205), Homicide in Canada (catalogue 85-209), and Causes of Death (catalogue 84-203). Homicide data collected from the latter two publications may not be consistent with each other because of different scoring methods and information sources.

Administrative data, such as firearm acquisition certificates (FAC) and firearm related permits issued, were drawn from the RCMP publication, Annual Firearms Report to the Solicitor General of Canada. These data are not available prior to 1978.

KEY STATISTICS

Criminal Use of Firearms

Homicide and Robbery

Table 1 presents data on homicide and robbery offences involving firearms. (Homicide offences include murder (first and second degree), manslaughter, and infanticide.) Prior to 1979 there was a gradual, sometimes fluctuating, increase in the homicide rate. Immediately following 1979, the total homicide rate decreased; the rate falling from 2.81 in 1978 to 2.66 in 1979. Annual homicide rates have been consistently lower than pre-1979 figures. These recent rates have remained fairly stable, with small fluctuations showing no clear trend.

Looking at only those homicides which involved firearms, there is a somewhat different trend. The firearms homicide rate has been declining since 1975. In addition, the proportion of homicides involving firearms have been declining since 1974.

The frequency and rate of total robberies and robberies involving firearms are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1.

TABLE 1

NUMBER, RATE AND PROPORTION OF SELECTED OFFENCES INVOLVING FIREARMS, 1974-1984

| YEAR | HOMICIDE | | | ROBBERY | | | | | | |
|------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------|--------------------------|------|------------------|------|
| | All offences No. | Rate ⁽¹⁾ | Firearms involved No. | % ⁽²⁾ | All offences No. | Rate | Firearms involved No. | Rate | % ⁽²⁾ | |
| 1974 | 600 | 2.68 | 283 | 1.27 | 47.2 | 16,955 | 75.8 | 5861 | 26.2 | 34.6 |
| 1975 | 701 | 3.09 | 292 | 1.29 | 41.7 | 21,299 | 93.8 | 8962 | 39.5 | 42.1 |
| 1976 | 668 | 2.91 | 258 | 1.12 | 38.6 | 20,050 | 87.2 | 7908 | 34.4 | 39.4 |
| 1977 | 711 | 3.06 | 260 | 1.12 | 36.6 | 19,491 | 83.8 | 7507 | 32.3 | 38.5 |
| 1978 | 661 | 2.81 | 250 | 1.06 | 37.8 | 19,673 | 83.7 | 7203 | 30.6 | 36.6 |
| 1979 | 631 | 2.66 | 207 | 0.87 | 32.8 | 20,899 | 88.0 | 7439 | 31.3 | 35.6 |
| 1980 | 593 | 2.47 | 195 | 0.81 | 32.9 | 24,581 | 102.2 | 8594 | 35.8 | 35.0 |
| 1981 | 648 | 2.66 | 199 | 0.82 | 30.7 | 26,292 | 108.0 | 9040 | 37.1 | 34.4 |
| 1982 | 670 | 2.72 | 248 | 1.01 | 37.0 | 27,257 | 110.7 | 8954 | 36.4 | 32.9 |
| 1983 | 682 | 2.74 | 224 | 0.90 | 32.8 | 24,274 | 97.5 | 7505 | 30.2 | 30.9 |
| 1984 | 667 | 2.65 | 229 | 0.91 | 34.5 | 23,310 | 92.8 | 6886 | 27.4 | 29.5 |

-- Not available

(1) Rate per 100,000 Canadian population

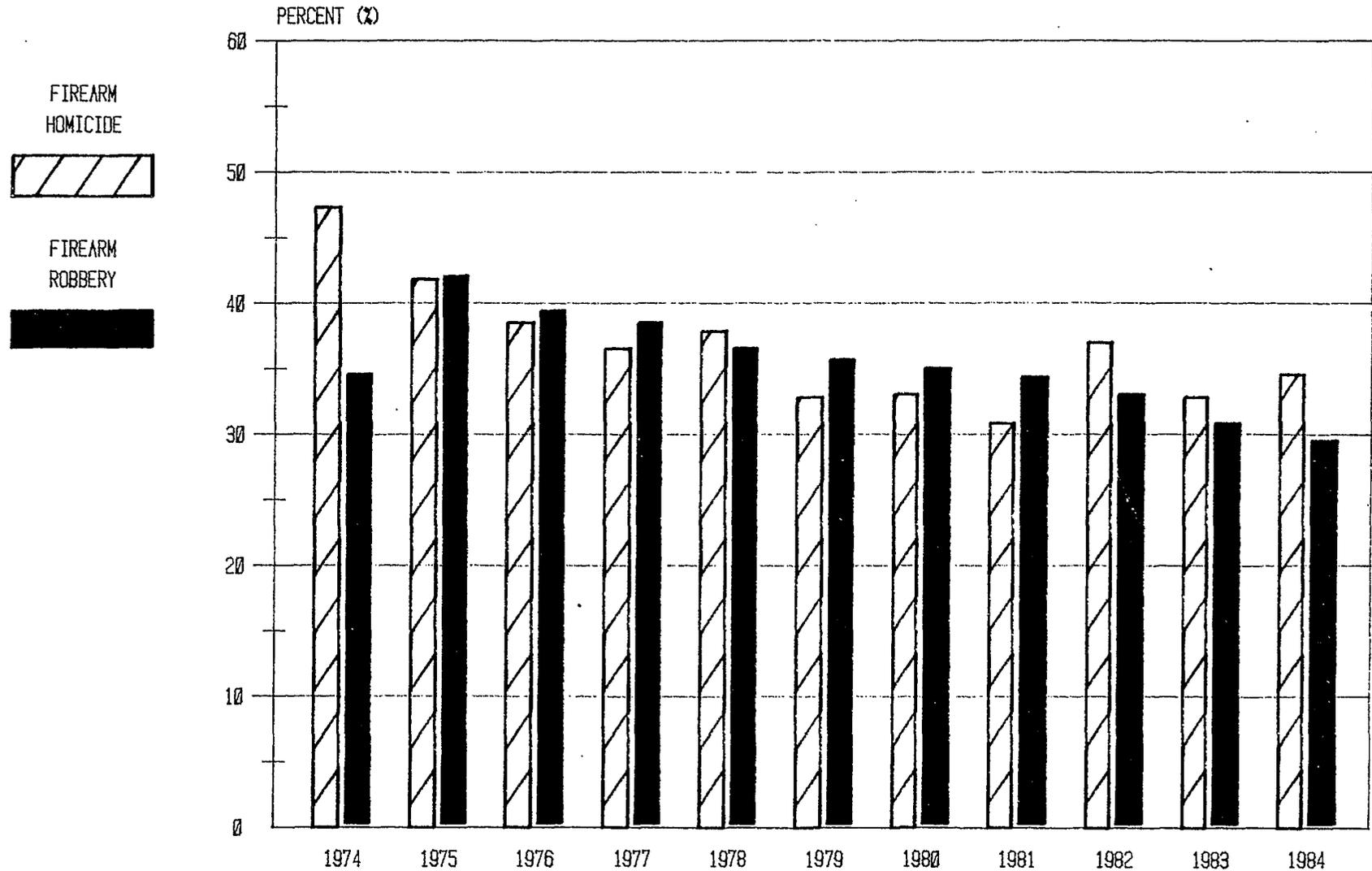
(2) Percentage of total offences (homicide or robbery)

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Crime Statistics, Catalogue 85-205
 Statistics Canada, Homicide Statistics, Catalogue 85-209

FIGURE 1

PERCENT OF OFFENCES INVOLVING FIREARMS

HOMICIDE AND ROBBERY



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Crime Statistics, Catalogue 85-205
Statistics Canada, Homicide Statistics, Catalogue 85-209

The rate of all robberies, including robberies involving firearms, declined from 1976 to 1978. In 1979 there was an increase in the rate of all robbery offences (again, including armed robbery) which persisted until 1983. The rate then started to decline once more. The last column in Table 1 shows the proportion of robberies involving firearms. The decline which began in 1976 has continued, indicating that the growth in robbery rates has outpaced the growth of firearm robberies.

Methods Used to Commit Homicide and Robbery

Tables 2 and 3 present data on methods used to commit homicide and robbery. Since 1978, the proportion of homicides committed by stabbing and "other" methods increased slightly, while the percentage of shooting homicides decreased.

This same shift developed for firearm robbery. Since 1978 a 19% drop in the rate of firearm robbery has occurred, while there has been a 47% increase in the use of other weapons.

Finally, Table 4 shows selected offences involving firearms by region. Some regional disparity is evident for both homicide and robbery offences. Specifically, for Quebec the percentage of homicides and robberies committed by firearm, 43% and 44% respectively, are much higher than the national averages. British Columbia also experiences a relatively high proportion of firearm homicides. Nationally, approximately one-third of both robbery and homicide offences involve firearms.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF METHODS USED TO
COMMIT HOMICIDE, CANADA, 1972-1983

| YEAR | SHOOTING | | BEATING | | STABBING | | OTHER(1) | | TOTAL HOMICIDES | |
|------|----------|------|---------|------|----------|------|----------|------|-----------------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1972 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 521(2) | 100.0 |
| 1973 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 546(2) | 100.0 |
| 1974 | 283 | 47.2 | 132 | 22.0 | 93 | 15.5 | 92 | 15.3 | 600 | 100.0 |
| 1975 | 292 | 41.7 | 163 | 23.3 | 124 | 17.7 | 122 | 17.4 | 701 | 100.0 |
| 1976 | 258 | 38.6 | 148 | 22.2 | 136 | 20.4 | 126 | 18.9 | 668 | 100.0 |
| 1977 | 260 | 36.6 | 152 | 21.4 | 149 | 21.0 | 150 | 21.1 | 711 | 100.0 |
| 1978 | 250 | 37.8 | 151 | 22.8 | 146 | 22.1 | 114 | 17.3 | 661 | 100.0 |
| 1979 | 207 | 32.8 | 132 | 20.9 | 162 | 25.7 | 130 | 20.6 | 631 | 100.0 |
| 1980 | 195 | 32.9 | 117 | 19.7 | 138 | 23.3 | 143 | 24.1 | 593 | 100.0 |
| 1981 | 199 | 30.7 | 155 | 23.9 | 176 | 27.2 | 118 | 18.2 | 648 | 100.0 |
| 1982 | 248 | 37.0 | 124 | 18.5 | 182 | 27.2 | 116 | 17.3 | 670 | 100.0 |
| 1983 | 224 | 32.8 | 149 | 21.9 | 173 | 25.4 | 136 | 19.9 | 682 | 100.0 |

-- Not available

- (1) Includes strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning, etc.
(2) Infanticide not included.

Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Homicide Statistics, Catalogue 85-209.

TABLE 3
 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WEAPONS USED TO COMMIT ROBBERY, 1974-1984

| YEAR | FIREARM | | OTHER WEAPON | | UNKNOWN/ NO WEAPON | | TOTAL ROBBERIES | |
|------|---------|------|--------------|------|-----------------------|------|-----------------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1974 | 5,861 | 34.6 | 2,809 | 16.6 | 8,285 | 48.9 | 16,955 | 100.0 |
| 1975 | 8,962 | 42.1 | 3,503 | 16.5 | 8,834 | 41.5 | 21,299 | 100.0 |
| 1976 | 7,908 | 39.4 | 3,371 | 16.8 | 8,771 | 43.8 | 20,050 | 100.0 |
| 1977 | 7,507 | 38.5 | 3,350 | 17.2 | 8,634 | 44.3 | 19,491 | 100.0 |
| 1978 | 7,203 | 36.6 | 3,338 | 17.0 | 9,132 | 46.4 | 19,673 | 100.0 |
| 1979 | 7,439 | 35.6 | 3,806 | 18.2 | 9,654 | 46.2 | 20,899 | 100.0 |
| 1980 | 8,594 | 35.0 | 4,763 | 19.4 | 11,224 | 45.7 | 24,581 | 100.0 |
| 1981 | 9,040 | 34.4 | 5,455 | 20.8 | 11,797 | 44.9 | 26,292 | 100.0 |
| 1982 | 8,954 | 32.9 | 6,161 | 22.6 | 12,142 | 44.5 | 27,257 | 100.0 |
| 1983 | 7,505 | 30.9 | 5,789 | 23.9 | 10,980 | 45.2 | 24,274 | 100.0 |
| 1984 | 6,886 | 29.5 | 5,826 | 25.0 | 10,598 | 45.5 | 23,310 | 100.0 |

Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Crime Statistics, Catalogue 85-205

TABLE 4
 PROPORTION OF SELECTED OFFENCES INVOLVING FIREARMS
 BY REGION, 1983

| REGION | HOMICIDE | | | ROBBERY | | |
|------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| | No. Involving Firearms | Total | % | No. Involving Firearms | Total | % |
| Atlantic | 9 | 30 | 30.0 | 103 | 683 | 15.1 |
| Québec | 81 | 190 | 42.6 | 4,671 | 10,748 | 43.5 |
| Ontario | 53 | 202 | 26.2 | 1,144 | 5,824 | 19.6 |
| Prairies | 37 | 148 | 25.0 | 808 | 3,529 | 22.9 |
| British Columbia | 42 | 108 | 38.9 | 772 | 3,445 | 22.4 |
| Yukon/N.W.T. | 2 | 4 | 50.0 | 7 | 45 | 15.6 |
| Canada | 224 | 682 | 32.8 | 7,505 | 24,274 | 30.9 |

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Crime Statistics,
 Catalogue 85-205
 Statistics Canada, Homicide Statistics,
 Catalogue 85-209

Non-Criminal Firearm Deaths

Table 5 presents data on all firearm deaths.

Suicides represent approximately 75% of all firearm deaths. As for the rate of firearm suicides, a steady increase is observed until 1979 after which a substantial decrease occurs. After this initial decline the firearm suicide rate has shown a small but steady increase, though it has not risen to the high recorded in 1978.

The proportion of suicides committed with a firearm shows a somewhat different trend. Again, a sharp decrease in 1979 resulted in a lower proportion of suicides being committed with a firearm. The proportion of firearm suicides stayed at this low level after 1979.

Figure 2 shows the number and rate of total suicides and firearm suicides by province. Generally, the number and rate of firearm suicides seems to be fairly consistent across provinces with the exception of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. (The rates for these regions should be interpreted with caution because of the very small absolute numbers.)

Total firearm accidents account for a decreasing proportion of all firearm deaths. From 1969 to 1983 there has been a 75% decrease in the rate of these incidents.

Figure 3 presents the number and rate per 100,000 general population of accidental firearm deaths in comparison with other accidental deaths by province for 1983. The findings indicate that Manitoba has the greatest rate of fatal firearm accidents. In comparison with other types of accidental deaths, the rate of accidental firearm deaths is relatively low.

TABLE 5
TOTAL FIREARM DEATHS
1969-1983

| YEAR | HOMICIDES ⁽¹⁾ | | | SUICIDES | | | ACCIDENTS | | LEGAL INTERVENTION | | UNDETERMINED | | TOTAL | |
|------|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------|------------------|------|-----------|------|--------------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| | No. | % ⁽²⁾ | Rate ⁽³⁾ | No. | % ⁽²⁾ | Rate | No. | Rate | No. | Rate | No. | Rate | No. | Rate |
| 1969 | 156 | 41.6 | 0.74 | 749 | 32.7 | 3.57 | 133 | 0.63 | 5 | .02 | 19 | .09 | 1062 | 5.06 |
| 1970 | 184 | 43.7 | 0.86 | 796 | 33.0 | 3.74 | 129 | 0.61 | 11 | .05 | 16 | .08 | 1136 | 5.33 |
| 1971 | 190 | 41.5 | 0.88 | 924 | 36.1 | 4.28 | 143 | 0.66 | 14 | .06 | 27 | .13 | 1298 | 6.02 |
| 1972 | 203 | 40.2 | 0.93 | 935 | 35.2 | 4.29 | 102 | 0.47 | 7 | .03 | 21 | .10 | 1268 | 5.82 |
| 1973 | 213 | 40.3 | 0.97 | 950 | 34.3 | 4.31 | 123 | 0.56 | 10 | .05 | 35 | .16 | 1331 | 6.04 |
| 1974 | 269 | 49.5 | 1.20 | 1021 | 35.2 | 4.57 | 122 | 0.55 | 8 | .04 | 47 | .21 | 1467 | 6.56 |
| 1975 | 263 | 43.5 | 1.16 | 1053 | 37.5 | 4.64 | 111 | 0.49 | 8 | .04 | 87 | .38 | 1522 | 6.71 |
| 1976 | 220 | 39.6 | 0.96 | 1095 | 37.3 | 4.76 | 89 | 0.39 | 7 | .03 | 70 | .31 | 1481 | 6.44 |
| 1977 | 229 | 38.4 | 0.98 | 1271 | 38.3 | 5.46 | 100 | 0.43 | 10 | .04 | 93 | .40 | 1703 | 7.32 |
| 1978 | 229 | 40.2 | 0.97 | 1287 | 37.0 | 5.47 | 90 | 0.38 | 16 | .07 | 94 | .40 | 1716 | 7.30 |
| 1979 | 183 | 31.4 | 0.77 | 1085 | 32.3 | 4.57 | 71 | 0.30 | 15 | .06 | 62 | .26 | 1416 | 5.96 |
| 1980 | 184 | 37.2 | 0.77 | 1114 | 33.2 | 4.63 | 74 | 0.31 | 6 | .02 | 43 | .18 | 1421 | 5.91 |
| 1981 | 180 | 32.1 | 0.74 | 1169 | 34.4 | 4.80 | 62 | 0.25 | 7 | .03 | 55 | .23 | 1473 | 6.05 |
| 1982 | 213 | 36.0 | 0.86 | 1195 | 33.9 | 4.85 | 56 | 0.23 | 6 | .02 | 58 | .24 | 1528 | 6.20 |
| 1983 | 198 | 33.5 | 0.80 | 1235 | 32.9 | 5.00 | 41 | 0.16 | 11 | .04 | 33 | .13 | 1518 | 6.10 |

(1) These figures may not correspond to those provided by the Homicide Program of Statistics Canada because of different scoring rules and data sources.

(2) Percentage of total homicides or suicides

(3) Rate per 100,000 Canadian population.

Source: Statistics Canada, Causes of Death, Catalogue 84-203

TOTAL SUICIDES & SUICIDES BY FIREARMS

Number and Rate By Provinces 1983

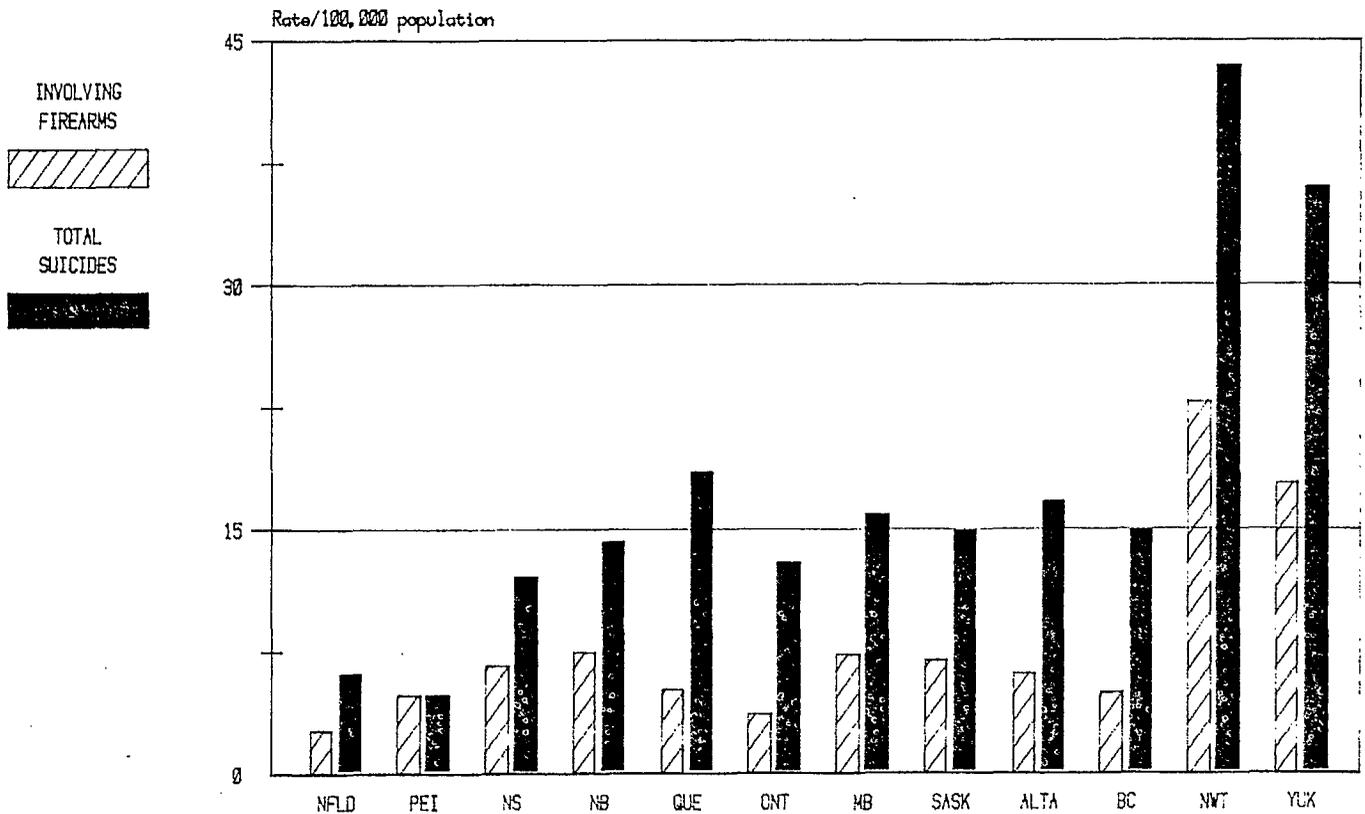
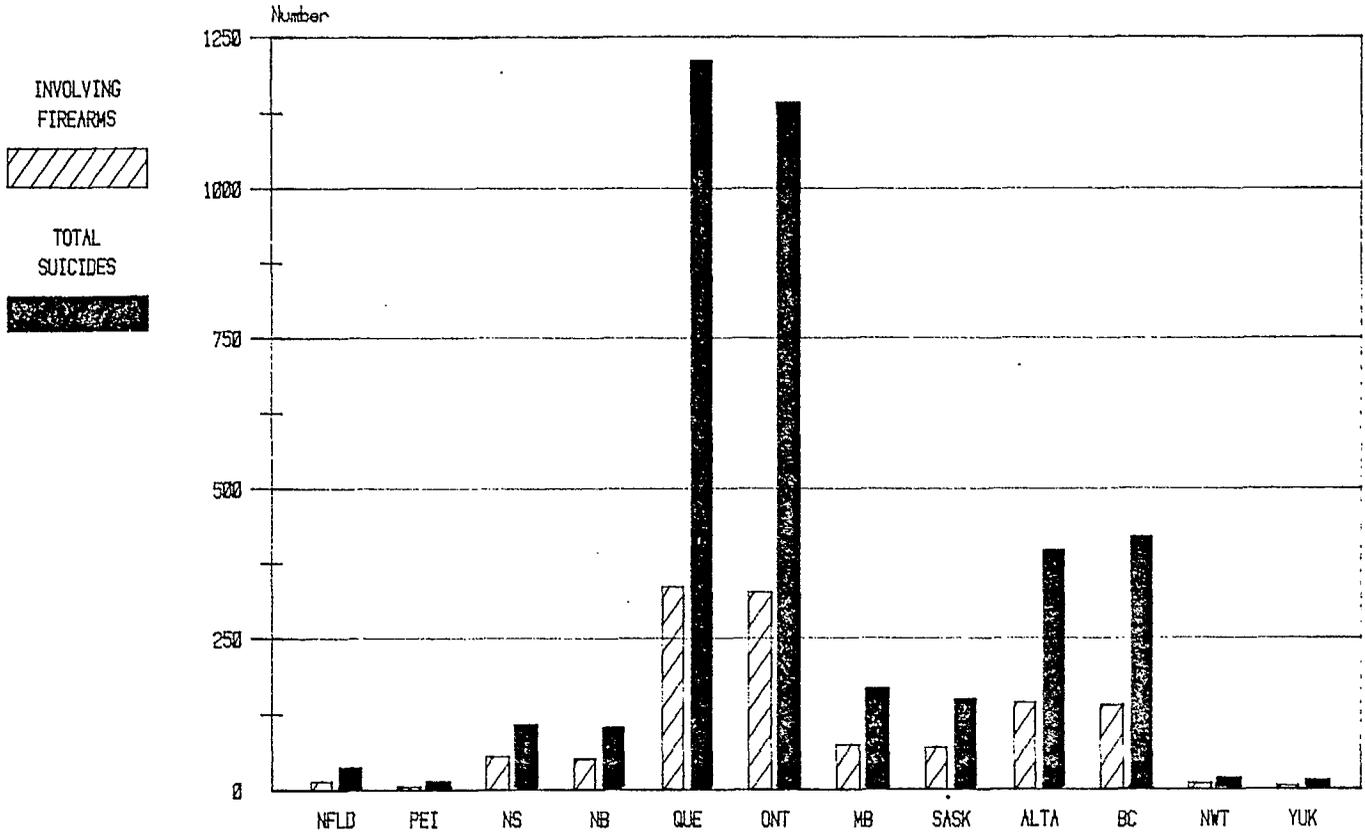
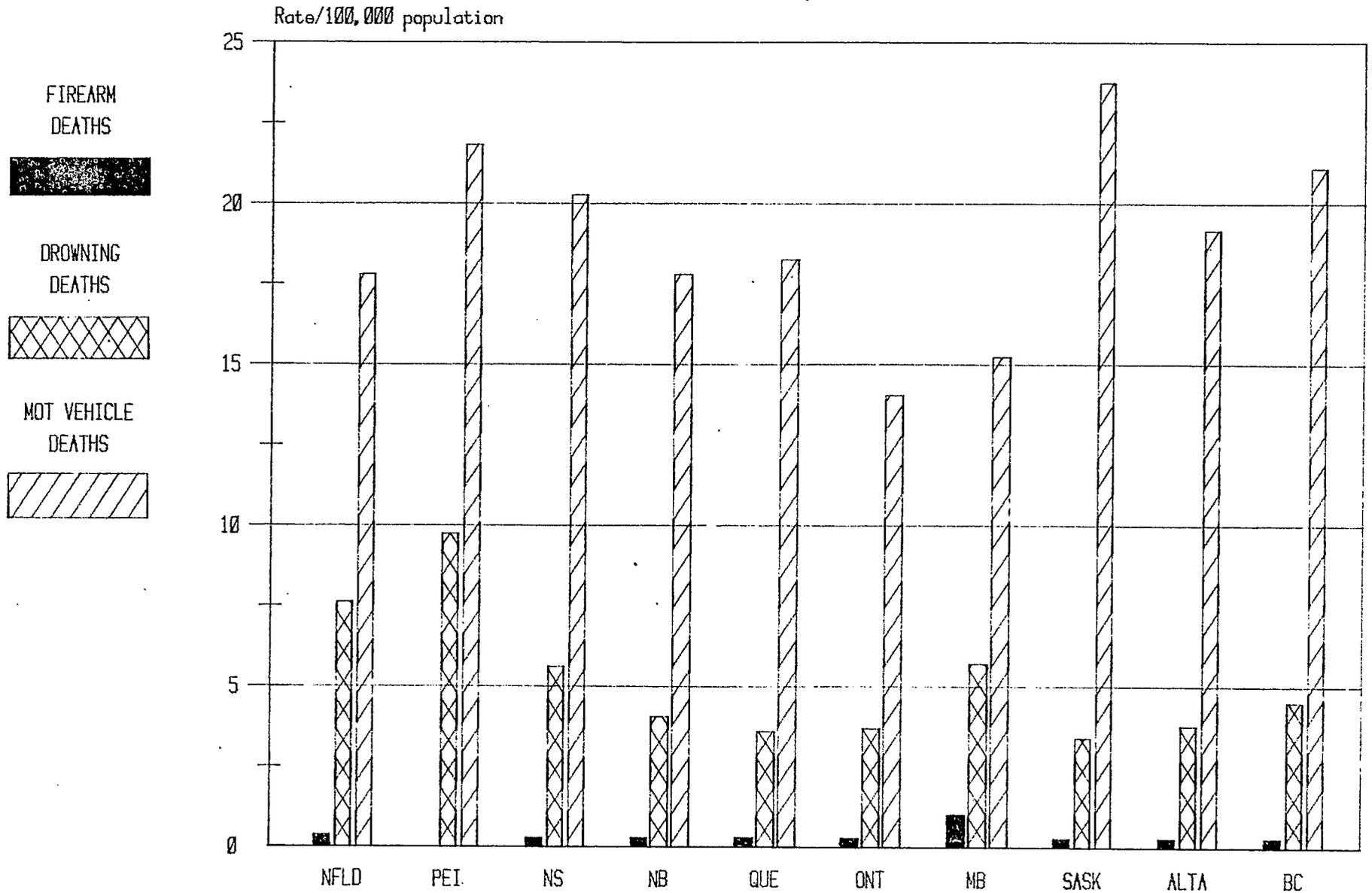


FIGURE 3

ACCIDENTAL FIREARM & OTHER DEATHS: 1983

Rates By Province



Source: Statistics Canada, Causes of Death, Catalogue 84-203

ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION

The 1977 firearms legislation introduced a new certificate system. Part of this legislation package instituted the requirement that persons wishing to acquire firearms must first obtain a firearms acquisition certificate (FAC) for newly acquired firearms. Legislation concerning minors possessing firearms, transportation of firearms, and carrying of firearms was also introduced or modified.

Firearm Acquisition Certificates

Data on the administration of these procedures are presented in Table 6 through 8 for the years 1979 to 1985. Table 6 presents information on the issuance of these certificates and permits. Firearm acquisition certificates are issued for a five year period and it is therefore difficult to find any meaningful trend in this short time. In 1979, 251,207 FAC's were issued, or approximately to one person out of every one hundred in Canada. A smaller number were issued in subsequent years as would be expected because of the five year validation period. During 1985, a total of 175,979 FAC's were issued. Over the seven year period, an average of 179,412 FAC's were issued.

Table 7 shows the distribution of firearm acquisition certificates, by province, for 1985. Regional differences are evident with respect to the number and rate of FAC's issued. Ontario and Quebec account for the highest number (50% of total FAC's); however, these provinces show relatively low rates of certificates issued per capita. The highest number of FAC's issued per 100,000 population were in the Northwest Territories (3,625), Yukon (3,123) and New Brunswick (1,383). Saskatchewan and Alberta also showed relatively high numbers of FAC's issued. (The rates for the first two regions should be interpreted with caution because of the small absolute numbers.)

TABLE 6
NUMBER AND RATE OF FIREARM CERTIFICATES AND PERMITS ISSUED 1979-1985

| YEAR | FIREARM ACQUISITION CERTIFICATES | | REGISTRATION ⁽¹⁾ CERTIFICATES | | MINOR'S PERMITS | | PERMITS TO CARRY | | PERMITS TO TRANSPORT | |
|------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | Number | Rate ⁽²⁾ | Number | Rate ⁽²⁾ | Number | Rate ⁽³⁾ | Number | Rate ⁽²⁾ | Number | Rate ⁽²⁾ |
| 1979 | 251,207 | 1057.8 | 30,422 | 128.1 | 3,998 | 229.7 | 19,119 | 80.5 | 28,121 | 118.4 |
| 1980 | 209,757 | 872.4 | 9,243 | 38.4 | 3,918 | 236.6 | 21,223 | 88.3 | 29,117 | 121.1 |
| 1981 | 167,537 | 688.2 | 14,479 | 59.5 | 3,075 | 194.7 | 22,226 | 91.3 | 38,989 | 160.2 |
| 1982 | 146,353 | 594.2 | 32,123 | 130.4 | 2,891 | 187.6 | 31,114 | 126.3 | 40,900 | 166.1 |
| 1983 | 133,515 | 536.4 | 30,121 | 121.0 | 2,897 | 189.0 | 32,586 | 130.9 | 44,204 | 177.6 |
| 1984 | 171,537 | 682.7 | 30,815 | 122.6 | 3,238 | 213.6 | 36,327 | 144.6 | 47,704 | 189.8 |
| 1985 | 175,979 | 694.0 | 33,685 | 132.8 | 2,979 | 199.7 | 38,254 | 150.9 | 49,735 | 196.2 |

- (1) Restricted weapons registered for the first time.
(2) Rate per 100,000 Canadian total population.
(3) Rate per 100,000 Canadian population aged 12-15 years.

Source: R.C.M.P., Annual Firearms Report to the Solicitor General of Canada.

TABLE 7
NUMBER AND RATE OF FIREARM ACQUISITION CERTIFICATES AND PERMITS ISSUED BY PROVINCE
1985

| PROVINCE | FIREARM ACQUISITION CERTIFICATES | | MINOR'S PERMITS | | PERMITS TO CARRY | | PERMITS TO TRANSPORT | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | Number | Rate ⁽¹⁾ | Number | Rate ⁽²⁾ | Number | Rate ⁽¹⁾ | Number | Rate ⁽¹⁾ |
| NEWFOUNDLAND | 4,311 | 742.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 296 | 51.0 | 349 | 60.1 |
| NOVA SCOTIA | 7,922 | 899.5 | 545 | 947.8 | 748 | 84.9 | 1,694 | 192.4 |
| NEW BRUNSWICK | 9,947 | 1383.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 286 | 39.8 | 560 | 77.9 |
| PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND | 680 | 535.0 | 140 | 1590.9 | 80 | 62.9 | 175 | 137.7 |
| QUEBEC | 36,310 | 551.8 | 40 | 11.2 | 7,315 | 111.2 | 12,869 | 195.6 |
| ONTARIO | 49,529 | 546.3 | 1,185 | 221.3 | 12,751 | 140.6 | 8,269 | 91.2 |
| MANITOBA | 8,128 | 759.9 | 45 | 68.5 | 1,654 | 154.6 | 1,503 | 140.5 |
| SASKATCHEWAN | 11,707 | 1148.3 | 859 | 1340.1 | 2,189 | 214.7 | 2,915 | 285.9 |
| ALBERTA | 25,633 | 1091.3 | 147 | 106.1 | 6,210 | 264.4 | 12,547 | 534.2 |
| BRITISH COLUMBIA | 19,255 | 665.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 6,421 | 222.0 | 8,626 | 298.2 |
| NORTHWEST TERRITORIES | 1,845 | 3624.8 | 5 | - | 81 | 159.1 | 136 | 267.2 |
| YUKON | 712 | 3122.8 | 13 | 866.7 | 223 | 978.1 | 92 | 403.5 |
| CANADA | 175,979 | 694.0 | 2,979 | 199.7 | 38,254 | 144.6 | 49,735 | 196.1 |

(1) Rate per 100,000 total Canadian population.

(2) Rate per 100,000 Canadian population aged 12-15 years.

Source: R.C.M.P., Annual Firearms Report to the Solicitor General of Canada

Minor's Permits

Any person, aged between 12 and 16 years, wishing to possess a firearm is required to obtain a minor's permit. The number and rate of permits issued has decreased slightly over the six year period (see Table 6). Table 7 presents the number and rate of minor's permits issued by province. Saskatchewan reports the highest issuance of these permits, while Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and British Columbia report no permits being issued during 1985.

Restricted Weapons Registration Certificates

A registration certificate is required for each restricted firearm. Restricted firearms have been controlled to some extent, in Canada, since 1879 (Scarff, Zaharchuk, Jacques and McAuley, 1981). The new legislation changed little with regard to these firearms.

Table 8 presents data on restricted firearms for an eight year period. Each year, with the exception of 1980 and 1981, the number of new registration certificates issued has been around thirty thousand. The lows recorded in 1980 and 1981 may have been partially influenced by the amnesty period in 1978. The number of transfers has stabilized in recent years to approximately twenty thousand a year. Overall, transfer of registration certificates account for approximately 85% of all registered certificates issued during this time period.

Table 8 also gives the number of registrations withdrawn each year from 1978 to 1985. Restricted weapon registration certificates may be withdrawn from the registry in cases of exportation or destruction of a firearm. The number increased in the three years following the amnesty program, but has since levelled off to about ten to eleven thousand each year. In 1985, only a small fraction (1%) of the total number of restricted weapons were withdrawn.

TABLE 8
NUMBER OF RESTRICTED WEAPONS REGISTERED, 1978-1985

| YEAR | NEW REGISTRATION Number | REGISTRATIONS TRANSFERRED ⁽¹⁾ Number | REGISTRATIONS WITHDRAWN ⁽²⁾ Number | TOTAL RESTRICTED WEAPONS REGISTERED ⁽³⁾ Number |
|------|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1978 | 18,974 | 53,515 | 5,507 | 725,421 |
| 1979 | 30,422 | 80,784 | 2,790 | 751,775 |
| 1980 | 9,243 | 87,092 | 11,018 | 750,000 |
| 1981 | 14,479 | 35,408 | 7,930 | 756,549 |
| 1982 | 32,123 | 18,066 | 12,349 | 776,323 |
| 1983 | 30,121 | 21,340 | 11,375 | 795,069 |
| 1984 | 30,815 | 18,738 | 9,313 | 816,571 |
| 1985 | 33,685 | 20,433 | 9,611 | 840,645 |

1. Previously registered restricted weapons registered to new registrants.
2. Restricted weapon registration certificates withdrawn from registry (weapons destroyed, exported, forfeited by law).
3. As of each year end.

Source: R.C.M.P., Annual Firearms Report to the Solicitor General of Canada.

Finally, Table 8 provides the total number of restricted weapons registered. This number has increased steadily from 1978. Overall, the total number of restricted weapons registered in Canada, as of the end of 1985, was 840,645, a 16% increase since 1978.

Permits Issued

Permits to Carry

These permits allow the holders to carry a restricted weapon "elsewhere than at the place at which he is otherwise entitled to possess it" (Criminal Code, Section 106.2). Permits to carry are usually issued to persons who require firearms for lawful occupational or target shooting purposes. The individual circumstances and restrictions are specified in the permit.

Table 6 presents the number and rate of permits to carry issued since 1978. The provisions of these permits were modified in 1978, although the permit system has existed for many years prior to 1978. The major change in 1978 was that the permit would no longer be issued for the protection of property. The per capita issuance of this permit almost doubled over the seven year period.

Table 7 shows the regional distribution of permits to carry. The Western provinces exhibit a higher rate of issuance of permits to carry restricted weapons.

Permits to Transport

Finally, permits to transport restricted weapons are issued on a temporary basis for reasons such as a change of residence and gun shows. Table 6 reveals an increase in the issuance of transport permits since 1979. Table 7, again, shows Western Canada as having the highest rates of issuance of transport permits.

Business Permits

All persons carrying on business related to firearms sales, manufacturing, ammunition or pawning must have a business permit. Table 9 shows the number of business permits issued for restricted and non-restricted sales for 1979 to 1985. Overall, the total number of permits issued to businesses dealing in non-restricted sales has decreased by over 40%.

The number of business permits issued for businesses dealing in both restricted and non-restricted sales has remained relatively stable since 1979 (see Table 9).

Table 10 shows the regional distribution of the total number of business permits issued in 1985. Overall, Quebec and Ontario have the greatest number of firearm businesses, although the western provinces have a large number relative to their population size.

Firearms Prohibitions

The legislation enacted in 1977 introduced stricter firearm prohibition orders as another avenue of ensuring that dangerous and irresponsible persons do not possess firearms. Prohibitions are court orders preventing an individual from owning, possessing or having control of a firearm, ammunition or explosive substances for a specified number of years.

TABLE 9

NUMBER OF BUSINESS PERMITS ISSUED FOR NON-RESTRICTED SALES, 1979-1985

| YEAR | RETAIL | | | | WHOLESALE | MANUFACTURING | GUN- SMITH | PAWN- BROKER | AMMUN- ITION | TOTAL |
|------|---------|-------|--------|------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|
| | 1-15(1) | 16-50 | 51-100 | 100+ | | | | | | |
| 1979 | 4,906 | 1,865 | 631 | 510 | 182 | 8 | 84 | 45 | 6,882 | 15,113 |
| 1980 | 3,376 | 1,025 | 281 | 195 | 80 | 5 | 76 | 27 | 4,505 | 9,570 |
| 1981 | 3,333 | 1,127 | 372 | 203 | 104 | 6 | 102 | 29 | 4,929 | 10,205 |
| 1982 | 2,971 | 1,010 | 295 | 145 | 114 | 7 | 94 | 22 | 4,664 | 9,322 |
| 1983 | 2,988 | 824 | 252 | 142 | 92 | 7 | 139 | 32 | 4,606 | 9,082 |
| 1984 | 2,914 | 711 | 226 | 139 | 84 | 7 | 131 | 34 | 4,609 | 8,855 |
| 1985 | 2,889 | 716 | 260 | 169 | 86 | 9 | 137 | 31 | 4,356 | 8,653 |

NUMBER OF BUSINESS PERMITS ISSUED FOR RESTRICTED AND NON-RESTRICTED SALES
1979-1984

| YEAR | RETAIL | | | | WHOLESALE | MANUFACTURING | GUN- SMITH | PAWN- BROKER | TOTAL |
|------|---------|-------|--------|------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-------|
| | 1-15(1) | 16-50 | 51-100 | 100+ | | | | | |
| 1979 | 410 | 230 | 137 | 242 | 176 | 25 | 84 | 3 | 1,307 |
| 1980 | 360 | 118 | 91 | 136 | 93 | 15 | 46 | 5 | 864 |
| 1981 | 372 | 145 | 108 | 218 | 88 | 21 | 48 | 3 | 1,003 |
| 1982 | 384 | 187 | 103 | 209 | 79 | 18 | 58 | 3 | 1,041 |
| 1983 | 453 | 181 | 121 | 178 | 88 | 11 | 53 | 13 | 1,098 |
| 1984 | 485 | 185 | 122 | 210 | 76 | 18 | 61 | 1 | 1,158 |
| 1985 | 552 | 192 | 130 | 235 | 94 | 15 | 62 | 2 | 1,282 |

(1) For the sale of 15 firearms or less.

Source: R.C.M.P., Annual Firearms Report to the Solicitor General of Canada.

TABLE 10

NUMBER OF BUSINESS PERMITS ISSUED, BY PROVINCE, 1985

| | RETAIL | WHOLE- SALE | MANU- FACTURING | GUN- SMITH | PAWN- BROKER | AMMUN-(¹) ITION | TOTAL NUMBER | % |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Newfoundland | 207 | 7 | 0 | 11 | 2 | 563 | 790 | 8.0 |
| Prince Edward Island | 20 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 16 | 43 | 0.4 |
| Nova Scotia | 331 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 113 | 447 | 4.5 |
| New Brunswick | 238 | 5 | 0 | 64 | 0 | 295 | 602 | 6.1 |
| Québec | 1,114 | 59 | 6 | 30 | 0 | 1,139 | 2,348 | 23.6 |
| Ontario | 1,390 | 61 | 15 | 15 | 4 | 839 | 2,324 | 23.4 |
| Manitoba | 409 | 10 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 280 | 705 | 7.1 |
| Saskatchewan | 375 | 3 | 2 | 19 | 8 | 415 | 822 | 8.3 |
| Alberta | 451 | 12 | 0 | 10 | 8 | 387 | 868 | 8.7 |
| British Columbia | 477 | 19 | 1 | 42 | 7 | 290 | 836 | 8.4 |
| Northwest Territories | 113 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 121 | 1.2 |
| Yukon | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 29 | 0.3 |
| CANADA | 5,143 | 180 | 24 | 199 | 33 | 4,356 | 9,935 | 100.0 |

(1) Manufacturing, wholesale and retail

Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Source: R.C.M.P., Annual Firearms Report to the Solicitor General of Canada.

Table 11 presents data on the number of persons prohibited from possession of firearms by province, as recorded by the RCMP, Canadian Police Information Centre. Over the five year period shown, the total rate per 100,000 Canadians prohibited from owning firearms has doubled.

The western provinces, with the exception of British Columbia, exhibit high rates of prohibitions relative to the eastern and central regions. Also, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon have an extremely high number of prohibitions per capita. Again, these rates may reflect the level of gun-ownership within these regions and do not necessarily indicate a greater misuse of firearms.

Missing and Recovered Firearms

Table 12 shows the cumulative total number of firearms reported as lost, stolen or missing, and the total cumulative number that were reported recovered as of each year end. The data indicate that the number of firearms missing has increased. As of December 31, 1985, a total of 42,794 firearms were recorded as missing, while 1,839 were reported recovered and an additional 1,344 were found in pawn shops.

CONCLUSION

The proportion of incidents involving firearms has decreased over the past seven years examined. Western provinces and the Territories had relatively high rates of firearm acquisition certificates, permits and registration certificates issued. Since 1979 there has been a decline in the number of businesses dealing in non-restricted firearms. The judicial system has steadily increased the number of prohibition orders handed down.

TABLE 11

NUMBER AND RATE OF PERSONS PROHIBITED FROM POSSESSION
OF FIREARMS⁽¹⁾, BY PROVINCE 1981-1985

| | 1981 | | 1982 | | 1983 | | 1984 | | 1985 | |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | No | Rate ⁽²⁾ | No | Rate | No | Rate | No | Rate | No | Rate |
| Newfoundland | 39 | 6.9 | 57 | 10.0 | 80 | 13.8 | 101 | 17.5 | 119 | 20.5 |
| Prince Edward Island | 13 | 10.6 | 8 | 6.5 | 14 | 11.3 | 4 | 3.2 | 12 | 9.4 |
| Nova Scotia | 100 | 11.8 | 125 | 14.7 | 115 | 13.4 | 131 | 15.1 | 99 | 11.2 |
| New Brunswick | 96 | 13.8 | 96 | 13.7 | 113 | 16.0 | 96 | 13.5 | 95 | 13.2 |
| Quebec | 838 | 13.0 | 1,030 | 15.9 | 1,334 | 20.5 | 1,276 | 19.5 | 1,205 | 18.3 |
| Ontario | 944 | 11.0 | 1,312 | 15.1 | 1,506 | 17.1 | 1,910 | 21.4 | 2,625 | 29.0 |
| Manitoba | 301 | 29.3 | 405 | 39.2 | 473 | 45.2 | 493 | 46.7 | 493 | 46.1 |
| Saskatchewan | 152 | 15.7 | 185 | 18.9 | 280 | 28.2 | 454 | 45.2 | 692 | 67.9 |
| Alberta | 390 | 17.4 | 461 | 19.9 | 670 | 28.5 | 876 | 37.3 | 1,068 | 45.5 |
| British Columbia | 320 | 11.7 | 391 | 14.0 | 506 | 17.9 | 526 | 18.3 | 579 | 20.0 |
| Northwest Territories | 21 | 46.0 | 14 | 29.7 | 51 | 105.4 | 50 | 101.2 | 75 | 147.4 |
| Yukon | 14 | 60.3 | 31 | 130.8 | 18 | 80.7 | 20 | 91.7 | 22 | 96.5 |
| CANADA | 3,228 | 13.3 | 4,115 | 16.7 | 5,160 | 20.7 | 5,937 | 23.6 | 7,084 | 27.9 |

(1) Total number of persons prohibited from possessing firearms, ammunition, or explosive substances recorded by the Canadian Police Information Centre during the calendar year.

(2) Rate per 100,000 population by province.

Source: R.C.M.P., Annual Firearms Report to the Solicitor General of Canada.

TABLE 12

FIREARMS REPORTED LOST/STOLEN/MISSING AND RECOVERED,
1978-1985

| YEAR | MISSING ⁽¹⁾ | | | In Pawn ⁽²⁾ Shops | Recovered Found ⁽³⁾ |
|------|------------------------|--------------|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Restricted | Unrestricted | Total | | |
| 1978 | 15,911 | 13,079 | 28,990 | 1,809 | 1,012 |
| 1979 | 16,353 | 13,701 | 30,054 | 901 | 947 |
| 1980 | 17,185 | 15,810 | 32,995 | 1,199 | 1,083 |
| 1981 | 17,327 | 18,242 | 35,569 | 1,590 | 1,269 |
| 1982 | 16,309 | 17,569 | 33,878 | 1,404 | 1,648 |
| 1983 | 17,551 | 19,415 | 36,966 | 1,432 | 2,105 |
| 1984 | 18,441 | 21,368 | 39,809 | 1,103 | 1,818 |
| 1985 | 19,475 | 23,319 | 42,794 | 1,344 | 1,839 |

1. These figures represent cumulative totals of reported lost, stolen or missing firearms recorded in the Canadian Police Information Centre Property File since 1974, and which were still in that state as of December 31st of each year.
2. These figures represent a cumulative total of firearms in Pawn Shops recorded since 1974 and which were still in that state as of December 31st of each year.
3. These figures represent a cumulative total of firearms recorded by police agencies as outstanding recovered/found firearms for which ownership had not been established as of December 31st of each year.

Source: R.C.M.P., Annual Firearms Report to the Solicitor General of Canada.

APPENDIX

**CANADIAN POPULATION BY PROVINCE
1969-1985**

**Total Canadian Population by Province
(thousands)**

| | Nfld | P.E.I. | N.S. | N.B. | Que. | Ont. | Man. | Sask. | Alta | B.C. | Yuk. | NWT | Canada |
|------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|------|---------|
| 1969 | 514.0 | 111.0 | 775.0 | 628.0 | 5985.0 | 7385.0 | 979.0 | 958.0 | 1559.0 | 2060.0 | 16.0 | 31.0 | 21001.0 |
| 1970 | 517.0 | 110.0 | 782.0 | 627.0 | 6013.0 | 7551.0 | 983.0 | 941.0 | 1595.0 | 2128.0 | 17.0 | 33.0 | 21297.0 |
| 1971 | 522.1 | 111.6 | 789.0 | 634.6 | 6027.8 | 7703.1 | 988.2 | 926.2 | 1627.9 | 2184.6 | 18.4 | 34.8 | 21568.3 |
| 1972 | 530.0 | 112.6 | 794.6 | 640.1 | 6053.6 | 7809.9 | 991.2 | 914.2 | 1657.3 | 2241.4 | 19.5 | 37.3 | 21801.5 |
| 1973 | 537.3 | 114.0 | 804.3 | 647.1 | 6078.9 | 7908.8 | 996.2 | 904.5 | 1689.5 | 2302.4 | 20.5 | 39.4 | 22042.8 |
| 1974 | 541.5 | 115.2 | 811.5 | 653.6 | 6122.7 | 8054.1 | 1007.5 | 899.7 | 1722.4 | 2375.7 | 20.5 | 39.6 | 22363.9 |
| 1975 | 549.1 | 117.1 | 819.5 | 665.2 | 6179.0 | 8172.2 | 1013.6 | 907.4 | 1778.3 | 2433.2 | 21.3 | 41.2 | 22697.1 |
| 1976 | 557.7 | 118.2 | 828.6 | 677.2 | 6234.4 | 8264.5 | 1021.5 | 921.3 | 1838.0 | 2466.6 | 21.8 | 42.6 | 22992.6 |
| 1977 | 559.8 | 119.3 | 833.4 | 684.1 | 6284.0 | 8353.1 | 1027.4 | 934.9 | 1912.7 | 2499.4 | 21.8 | 42.8 | 23272.8 |
| 1978 | 561.5 | 121.0 | 837.5 | 688.1 | 6302.4 | 8439.6 | 1032.0 | 943.5 | 1983.1 | 2542.3 | 22.5 | 43.6 | 23517.0 |
| 1979 | 563.5 | 122.0 | 841.8 | 691.9 | 6338.9 | 8501.3 | 1028.0 | 951.3 | 2052.8 | 2589.4 | 22.3 | 44.0 | 23747.3 |
| 1980 | 565.6 | 122.8 | 845.1 | 695.4 | 6386.1 | 8569.7 | 1024.9 | 959.4 | 2140.6 | 2666.0 | 22.3 | 44.7 | 24042.5 |
| 1981 | 567.7 | 122.5 | 847.4 | 696.4 | 6438.2 | 8624.7 | 1026.2 | 968.3 | 2237.3 | 2744.2 | 23.2 | 45.7 | 24343.1 |
| 1982 | 568.5 | 122.7 | 851.7 | 698.9 | 6479.8 | 8716.1 | 1034.5 | 979.1 | 2318.5 | 2791.1 | 23.7 | 47.2 | 24631.8 |
| 1983 | 577.9 | 124.0 | 859.3 | 706.7 | 6521.6 | 8815.9 | 1047.2 | 992.7 | 2350.0 | 2823.9 | 22.3 | 48.4 | 24889.8 |
| 1984 | 579.5 | 125.3 | 869.9 | 713.3 | 6549.0 | 8937.4 | 1056.5 | 1006.2 | 2348.8 | 2870.7 | 21.8 | 49.4 | 25127.9 |
| 1985 | 580.4 | 127.1 | 880.7 | 719.2 | 6580.7 | 9066.2 | 1069.6 | 1019.5 | 2348.8 | 2892.5 | 22.8 | 50.9 | 25358.5 |

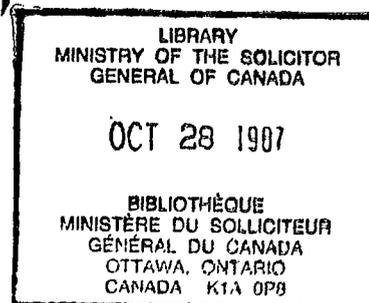
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