

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE ON TUESDAY 5 JUNE 2007

INQUIRY INTO THE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS OF JUNIOR SHOOTERS

Mr DAVID LLEWELLYN, MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, WAS CALLED AND EXAMINED, AND **Mr GRAHAM WILSON**, SENIOR PRIVATE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND WATER, WAS SWORN AND ALSO EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Finch) - We will start the meeting. Minister, thank you very much for joining us here today. We are curious about the thrust of the reference that you have brought to our committee, and we appreciate the fact that you have made time to come and give us a briefing about your aims and what you are seeking to achieve with this reference.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Thank you, Kerry. I am pleased to come to the meeting of the Community Development Committee and I thank the committee for taking on board this reference. It arises from the fact that we have had this firearms legislation in place since 2003 and when we brought the original bill down we indicated at that stage - in 1996 - that after a reasonable period of time we would need to review the legislation, which we have done. We have incorporated a series of amendments that cover resolutions from a number of national conferences on firearms, including the Australasian Police Ministers Council, where ministers resolved that under the national firearms trafficking policy agreement, all jurisdictions would make further provisions for the control of the illegal trade of firearms in Australia, with a further resolution concerning the security industry and the use of firearms, taking into account training needs, calibre limitations, characteristics and appearances of firearms used in the security industry compared to those used generally by Australian police services.

Our bill that we will introduce into the House of Assembly tomorrow has provisions that strengthen the licensing process for firearm dealers by requiring the provision of details of dealers' close associates with a view to establishing whether the close associate is a fit and proper person within the definition required under the Firearms Act 1996, to allow for the non-granting or cancellation of firearms dealers licences based on associations -

Mr WILKINSON - Can I ask how that is being done? If a person has a friend who has a prior conviction for matters involving guns they obviously are not going to list them among their close associates. So, is there to be a police check to see whether these people hang around with undesirables?

Mr LLEWELLYN - A number of situations have emerged in this regard. A 'close associate' of a firearm dealer is defined as a person who

'(a) holds or will hold a relevant financial interest or relevant position in a business that is or is proposed to be carried out under the licence and, by

virtue of that interest or power, is or will be able to exercise a significant influence over the business; or

(b) is entitled to exercise a relevant power over the conduct of the business that is, or is proposed to be, carried out under the licence.'

This also provides for the following definitions: 'relevant financial interest', 'relevant position' and 'relevant power'.

There have been some examples where bikie clubs and those sorts of people have been involved, so it is a provision that gives a little more flexibility in the issuing of a licence to someone whom the police would consider to be undesirable.

Mr WILKINSON - What used to happen with hotels was that you had to have the person charged, the authorised person - I forget what they were called. I know a bikie group owned a hotel in the city at one stage, and yet they had somebody else as their licensee - but it wasn't called a licensee. I forget what it was called, but they were the responsible person. And in this case they were a responsible person, but the people who really owned the hotel were the Rebels. I suppose it would take that sort of situation into account as well?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes.

Mr WHITELEY - Does that definition extend to an employee, Minister?

Mr LLEWELLYN - I think these are matters that you might pursue when we debate the legislation. I am trying to give you a definition of what we are doing in basic terms as a preliminary.

Mr WHITELEY - Okay, sure.

Mr LLEWELLYN - So we place restrictions on the persons who may be employed by firearm dealers, which will include holding specific firearm licences, allowing for offence provisions, and providing for indictable offences for unlawful trafficking in illegal firearms. It will also increase substantially the current penalties for certain offences and provide for firearms use for the security industry to be restricted and so on.

I think I mentioned that basically there are a series of other amendments in the Firearms Act now. We have consulted pretty widely with most organisations and individuals involved with firearms, including the National Coalition for Gun Control, the Sporting Shooters Association, the Tasmanian Firearm Owners Consultative Committee, the Tasmanian Pistol Association, the Tasmanian branch of the Australian Security Industry Association, the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Local Government Division), the Local Government Association of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, the Tasmanian Rifle Association, the Van Diemen Pistol Club, Tasmanian Deer Association, the Department of Primary Industries and Water,

the Tasmanian Deer Advisory Committee and various firearm dealers. They have all been consulted in this process.

There is amazing agreement from all parties on the legislation. However, two issues were pursued by a number of these organisations, particularly a subcommittee of the farmers and graziers. They were concerned about the adequacy of the legislation and how it fits into the national scene, bearing in mind that wherever possible we were supposed to have a national approach to firearms legislation. It has been noted by these groups that our firearms legislation does not adequately cover the issue of allowing the training of young people in firearm use. To that extent it differs from some of the other States where they allow it. The second issue concerned the cooling-off period for the purchase of a second and subsequent firearm. The 28-day cooling-off period was designed to prevent going to a shop out of rage and buying a firearm to shoot someone. These organisations argue that for a second firearm this is an unnecessary imposition. Having got a firearm, they do not need to go to a shop to buy one if they are going to dispatch someone. To go to a dealer and then wait 28 days for a second firearm because of a supposed impulse is a bit silly. Also, this is not reflected around the nation. Those two matters would have drawn quite a bit of debate if they had been within the legislation.

Mr MARTIN - Are all other states different from us in this?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Not all other states; they vary. This has been a bipartisan issue since changes to the act in the 1990s. On that basis it would be good for Parliament as a whole to look at these two issues and make recommendations. That is the point of the reference to the committee.

CHAIR - With respect to the junior shooters, what do the other States say? From your discussions with the States, is it controversial to go down to 12 years for training, or do you have agreement?

Mr LLEWELLYN - This was not raised in the Prime Minister's task force or in the ministerial council for police. The general issue was to use template legislation. At the time I think we used the New South Wales legislation as a template. Indeed, we had legislation very early in the piece following Port Arthur. On a national basis the legislation was supposed to be a template of New South Wales. Some of the States differ, so it is not uniform legislation. It is uniform in the core issues but not at the periphery. For instance, in Victoria a person who is 12 years of age and under 18 may carry and use category A and B longarms, category C longarms or general category handguns for the purpose of receiving instruction in the use of such firearms or engaging in sport or target shooting competitions. The chief commissioner must not issue a junior licence which authorises the carriage or use of a category C longarm unless the applicant can demonstrate that the licence is for the reason of clay target shooting - the five-shot shotgun. The chief commissioner must not issue a junior licence which authorises the carriage or use of a general category handgun unless the applicant can demonstrate that the licence is required for the reason of handgun target shooting.

In New South Wales, a minor's forearm permit is to be one of the following classes: a minor's firearm training permit or a minor's target pistol permit. The ages there are 12 to 18. In Queensland, minors 11 years old must be supervised by a licence-holder and have a parent's permission. There are two types of licence: club or primary production, and

either must be proved. They are unable to own a firearm. In South Australia, from the age of 12 there are two types of licence: junior shooters and primary producers. Junior shooters only shoot in competition. In Western Australia, junior shooters must be accompanied by a licensed shooter, with no other restrictions. In the Northern Territory, junior shooters can shoot under direct supervision of a licensed shooter. Junior club licences are available for range shooters.

In other words, in a sense we are the State out of step

Mr WILKINSON - Something along the lines of New South Wales - 12- to 18-year olds completing a firearms safety training course under personal supervision - seems to be more in step with the rest.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Everyone, before they use a firearm, has to be trained in the use of firearms, so that is consistent.

Mr WILKINSON - That is not in ours, though.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes, it is; you cannot get a licence unless you go through training.

Mr WILKINSON - As a junior shooter 16 to 18? They must be under the supervision of a licence-holder or person approved to supervise the use of a firearm.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes, but before they own a firearm they must have training. That could be changed on that basis.

Mr MARTIN - What is the aim in softening the legislation; why would we want to do that?

Mr LLEWELLYN - The argument comes from the sporting shooters and from the farmers and graziers. They believe that in order adequately to train a young person who is brought up in the country and is involved in rural activities - and shooting with uncles and grandfathers and so on is part of a country upbringing, particularly for boys - they now have to ignore the law. If they want to give a boy a shot, it is illegal and also for people on the land in pursuit in the pursuit of their normal activities with their sons and grandsons and so on.

Mr MORRIS - To clarify that: at the moment someone on a farm aged between 16 and 18 years can use a gun if they are under the supervision of a licence-holder or person approved to supervise. Is that correct?

Mr LLEWELLYN - If they are supervised.

Mr MORRIS - Yes, if they are supervised. Is this argument about allowing those children to use a gun unsupervised, as long as they are licensed, or is it about reducing -

Mr LLEWELLYN - It is the age limit really.

Mr MORRIS - So is there any argument about the 16 to 18 year olds? Or is this an argument about the 12 to 16 year olds having the same entitlements as the 16 to 18 year olds?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Those are issues that perhaps the committee can look at in regard to the other legislation, but the fundamental point that has been put to me is in relation to the age limit of a person being able to be supervised in the field. In some other States they have different provisions about being supervised on the range -

Mr MORRIS - That is correct. I am just trying to get clear what the current circumstances are.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I think those people would also say that they would like to be able to get a licence at 16, or something like that -

Mr WILSON - They want to be able to go to a range; they want to be able to teach their children to shoot in the field under supervision.

Mr MORRIS - They can do that at a range now, can't they? So anyone over 12 can go to a range to shoot, as long as they are under the supervision of a licence-holder or appropriate person. So there is no issue in relation to that. The issue is in relation to 'in the field' or 'in the paddock' as the case may be as to whether children can use guns unsupervised. Is that correct?

Mr LLEWELLYN - No. It must be supervised.

Mr WHITELEY - Not just isolated to a range?

Mr MORRIS - So this is about having 12 to 16 year olds able to operate in the field under supervision?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes.

Mr MORRIS - So there is no issue in relation to 16 to 18 year olds because they can already do that?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes.

Mr MORRIS - So this is only about 12- to 16-year-old children being able to operate in the field under supervision?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes.

Mr MORRIS - Right. So no-one is seeking to allow anyone under 18 to use a gun in an unsupervised situation. Is that correct?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes. The issue is around what is appropriate training and reducing the age from 16 to 12 in the field.

Mr WHITELEY - Could I also clarify that this is for use of a firearm, not the ownership of one? We are not talking about ownership for minors, are we?

Mr LLEWELLYN - No.

Mr MORRIS - We are just trying to get clear what we are dealing with.

Mr WHITELEY - So we are talking about being able to shoot a firearm under supervision of a licensed, qualified person, not just on the range, as is the case now, but also in situ - for example, if you are a member of the farming community on the farm. I know a lot of farmers say to me, 'There is nobody better than me to teach my son or daughter how to shoot a firearm because I have their interests at heart.' The reference we are looking at would consider whether or not we extend that opportunity.

Mr MORRIS - That is right - whether children under 16 would be able to start, or whether you would have to wait until you were 16.

Mr WHITELEY - You can do it now under 16, but on a range.

Mr MORRIS - Yes, that is right.

Mr MARTIN - Is there a definition of the word 'training'?

Mr LLEWELLYN - It is in the act as it stands. I do not have a copy of the act with me, but there is a process that you need to go through if you are to be considered appropriately trained before you can own a firearm. There is a TAFE course on the proper handling and use of firearms.

Mr MARTIN - I am a bit confused because we are talking about junior shooters being given appropriate training under supervision in the field. Brett just talked about there being no better trainer than a dad -

Mr WHITELEY - But he has to be a licence-holder.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Before the young person can actually own a firearm, he has to go through that official training. He has to attend the training sessions and qualify. It is part of the TAFE system. It means being supervised by a properly trained owner of a firearm, supervising directly that person's use of the firearm. Brett did say that there was no better person to train the young person than the father because he has his interests at heart. That may be so, but the young person still would have to go through the official process before he owned the firearm.

CHAIR - If the father is a licence-holder now, would he have come through without having to go through the training?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Some of them would have. When we translated this initially there was no requirement for that - it was a grandfather type of situation - but anyone after that point had to go through the training course.

CHAIR - That might be the point you are making, Terry - that some of those people giving that supervision may be inadequately trained themselves.

Mr WHITELEY -Yes, that is a point well made.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Nevertheless, before the young person owns a firearm, they would have to go through the official training.

Mr WHITELEY - Can I just clarify that 18 is the legal age to purchase and own a firearm in your own name?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes.

Mr WHITELEY - They can shoot under supervision up to 18, but they cannot have a firearm in their name?

Mr MORRIS - Nor can they shoot unsupervised - or is that being proposed?

Mr LLEWELLYN - No.

Mrs BUTLER - Do you want us to have a look at transport of the weapons as well?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Well, we have dealt with transport of firearms in the new legislation. We will amend the provisions for the safekeeping and transport of firearms and provide for the disposal of firearms, the control of injured, dangerous and diseased animals, the collection of valuable heirlooms and suspension of licences in certain circumstances. We will be requiring that in the transport of firearms they be contained in an enclosed box or bag or have a trigger-lock action installed with the firearm. At the moment some farmers are still concerned about that issue because they carry the firearm behind the back seat in the ute.

Mr WHITELEY - Minister, would you care for us to include in the reference looking at the adequacy or otherwise of the number of available shooting range options in the State. We are trying to encourage people to go through the right processes, but some would argue that at present there are insufficient opportunities for people - they have to travel great distances.

Mr LLEWELLYN - For sporting competition?

Mr WHITELEY - No, just for training. I have had that put to me.

Mr MORRIS - We have the potential to look at that. Can you grab a map of the ranges that exist?

Mr WHITELEY - The minister's office should have that.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Number 4 says 'any matters incidental thereto.' If you are talking about training and that sort of stuff, you could do it then.

Mr MORRIS - Minister, you talked earlier about having had a comprehensive range of submissions and consultations on the review of the act. Presumably those submissions went to these matters we are looking at.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Some of them did, yes.

Mr MORRIS - Is it possible for us to have a copy of the submissions you have received so that we don't need to go back and redo that work?

Mr LLEWELLYN - I don't know whether they are all here or not, but I have a copy of some of them here.

Mr WILSON - These submissions only relate to the two terms of reference.

Mr WHITELEY - Knowing some of those groups as we do, they probably took the opportunity to raise some of these issues and to draw an opinion on them.

Mr MORRIS - That presumably was an opinion they were entitled to and were asked to submit on.

Mr WHITELEY - So it would be helpful to see what they said.

Mr LLEWELLYN - They were asked to comment on the existing legislation.

Mr WHITELEY - And I'm sure they have.

Mr MORRIS - At least in relation to these matters, that will give us the full suite of comments. That would be appreciated. Unless something has radically changed in the 12 months since you received them, that should be up to date information.

CHAIR - However, what might have occurred is that people made a submission on the legislation changes but they might not have included specific discussion on these two areas which came up subsequently. In other words there might be other groups that did not get onto these subjects, but they may have something to say now that these are being highlighted.

Mr MORRIS - Although they did not know that these were not going to be done as part of the review. They were being asked at the time to comment on all matters.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr MORRIS - And at the time these were on the radar.

Mr WHITELEY - We can cover that. We have the list of all those people. Whether they included them or not, it would be wise to write to all those groups, once we decide what to do, to say we are now specifically addressing those matters. Anything they have not already put in writing for this committee would be welcome.

Mr MARTIN - Do we have representations from those opposed to softening the law, like the Coalition for Gun Control?

Mr LLEWELLYN - They commented on the total review of the firearms legislation. When we talked to them about what we were pursuing, they effectively agreed.

Mr WHITELEY - Which doesn't include what we are talking about here. They may have a different view.

Mr LLEWELLYN - They may well have a different view on these two items. Roland had a different view on the 28-day cooling off; he was opposed.

CHAIR - If somebody gets a licence to handle a certain type of firearm, and they are a bit warped and want to get a gun that is going to do more damage, is there a separate licence requirement for that gun - an automatic, for example?

Mr LLEWELLYN - You would have to go through the legislation to check which category. Category A is mainly two-barrel shotguns and .22 calibre rifles; category B is for heavier calibres; category C is for repeating and multiple-shot devices.

Mr WHITELEY - So, Chair, are you asking that if there is no cooling-off period for a second weapon, should it only be for the same category of firearm?

CHAIR - That is what I'm suggesting.

Mr WILSON - As the minister said, every person who buys a firearm, whether it is a first one, second or whatever, needs to justify the use. They have to get a permit to acquire. So even for the second firearm, they need a permit to acquire. You can't just go out and buy a firearm. You have to go to the firearms office and get a permit to acquire, and then go to the dealer to buy the gun. You will not get a permit to acquire if there is a restraining order against you and so on.

CHAIR - And you would need to purchase a firearm in the category in which you have a licence?

Mr LLEWELLYN - You would still have to justify it.

Mr WHITELEY - To go up a level?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes. You might want to become a member of a pistol club.

CHAIR - So there is a safety net to assess the person's motivation?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes.

Mr MORRIS - I was approached by a firearms dealer who said that, irrespective of the 28-day cooling-off period, it takes close to that for a person to go through this other process to get their permit and for the firearms dealer to do their checks. If the 28-day period were to change, the concern was that this would put pressure on the dealer to take less time to do their checks and bookwork. If it were reduced to 12 days it would still take longer than that for the paperwork to be processed. Therefore reducing it to 12 days, for example, would be impracticable.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I don't know whether that is true or not. If someone comes into a firearms dealer and they want to buy a second firearm, then they would go through the shop and have a look at the firearms and pick out a firearm and say they want to buy it. They would then say it is their second firearm, so they would get the dealer to put it aside, go to the police, have their checks and get their permit, and return to the dealer with that

permit. That may take, say, two weeks. Then they pass their money over with their permit and they get their firearm. Currently, they would have to come back with their permit after the two weeks and say, 'Here's my money for the firearm, but you hang onto it for 28 days'.

Mr MORRIS - So at the moment that is an additional 28 days?

Mr WHITELEY - Yes, once you have your permit. That's as I understand it.

Mr MORRIS - We need to check that.

Mr LLEWELLYN - No; it's from when the money is passed over, when the purchase occurs, and you can't purchase without a permit.

Mr WILKINSON - The important thing is that to own a gun in one of the categories you have to fulfil certain requirements. If you cannot fulfil certain requirements then you cannot own a gun within that category. Therefore when you apply to purchase a gun you have to be a fit and proper person and show that you are eligible to own a gun in that category. If you are not eligible, you don't get a permit. There is that double whammy.

Mr MORRIS - It's an interesting point that we need to check. Presumably the police check is the standard check at the moment?

Mr LLEWELLYN - I suggest that our firearms registry person might be someone you should call before the committee. You can ask her all these questions about the process.

Mr MORRIS - At the moment my understanding is that it takes five weeks to get a police check. I have had several complaints from nurses and so forth who have had to get police checks, and they are saying that it is a five-week wait. I wasn't aware that this 28-day period did not start until after that process had been completed.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I am almost certain that that is the case. You cannot actually purchase the firearm from a dealer or retailer unless you have a permit.

Mr MARTIN - Does Tasmania Police have a view on this?

Mr LLEWELLYN - A view on these two issues?

Mr MARTIN - Yes.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I am not sure whether they have actually stated their view. I think they may have, but I -

Mr MARTIN - Can we access that?

Mr LLEWELLYN - We can certainly look to see what the position is. They probably would have maintained the status quo, I would have thought.

Mr MORRIS - Is there someone appropriate in the police department - say the Commissioner - who we should talk to here?

Mr MARTIN - The Deputy Commissioner.

Mr LLEWELLYN - The Deputy Commissioner or the Commissioner would be fine.

Mr WHITELEY - You wouldn't have any problem with our asking them to come and explain it to us?

Mr LLEWELLYN - It is up to you.

Mr WHITELEY - But you are the minister.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I wouldn't have any problem with them being called.

Mr MORRIS - I was actually interested in another issue in relation to the number of offences of illegal use of guns over time. It was triggered by the spate of armed robberies of which at least a couple were carried out with replica guns.

Mr LLEWELLYN - There is a provision in the new act about those issues that I have just mentioned to you - what constitutes a firearm.

Mr WILSON - I think those recent offences were with a toy firearm.

Mr MORRIS - That is right. I was just interested in their records of what has happened with offences using actual, replica or toy guns over time - since 1996 in particular.

Mr WILSON - I think the Auditor-General did a review in relation to the Firearms Act of his own volition last year. He reported very favourably on the administration of the act, the number of deaths and the uses of firearms.

Mr WHITELEY - I was interested in following up Terry's question about people over 18 who currently have a licence and could undertake supervision being inadequately trained. You said that after a particular point in time training did become a necessity. Would you

-

Mr LLEWELLYN - They would all be older than 29.

Mr WHITELEY - I accept that, but would there be data available that says that at the moment in the marketplace there are so many licensed gun owners representing this many guns, and of that, this percentage were hooked in through the grandfather clause, and this smaller percentage are people who have signed up since the requirement to go through the training course. I would be intrigued to see that.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Anyone under 29 would have come through the new course -

Mr WHITELEY - Could that data be made available to us?

Mr WILSON - I don't know whether they can interrogate the system to that extent. They might be able to.

Mr WHITELEY - This point is very similar to the road safety issue. Everyone says, 'Oh well, half the problem we have with people on the roads today is that most of our kids have been taught by us.' It is a similar situation. Bad habits can be passed on.

Mrs BUTLER - What is the breadth of the information on the firearm registry?

Mr LLEWELLYN - The registry would have all that knowledge. When the licence period is due they bill each firearm owner. They have a list of every firearm that every licensed firearm owner has. All that data plus the age of the firearm owner is in the registry. But whether or not you could type into a computer on the database to extract everyone over 29 years of age, I do not know. As Graham said, it is a matter of how far you can interrogate it.

Mr WILSON - You may well be able to do that - I am not saying you can't.

Mr LLEWELLYN - It would require someone to go through it individually, and I think that might be a huge task.

Mr WHITELEY - But anyone under the age of 29 would have had to do the training?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes.

Mr WHITELEY - I just think it would be an interesting piece of data.

Mr MARTIN - I think the vast majority would still be on the grandfather clause.

Mr WHITELEY - I reckon you are right.

Mr LLEWELLYN - A bit like me!

Mr WHITELEY - We said grandfather; not great-grandfather!

Mr LLEWELLYN - I am not even a grandfather yet, but I do own a firearm. I shoot on the Campbell Town range.

Mr MORRIS - Minister, at the outset you were talking about national consistency as being one of the objectives. These are clearly two areas where there isn't national consistency. Are there any other areas where the aims of the 1996 agreement have not been implemented by Tasmania?

Mr LLEWELLYN - No, I think you will find the exceptions in Queensland and the Northern Territory. These two have taken the most licence on the national agreement.

Mr WILSON - I think the ACT and Tasmania are the two jurisdictions that have closely followed the template model.

Mr MORRIS - So the ACT legislation would probably be quite useful for us to use as a benchmark if we wanted to compare.

Mr WILSON - The ACT and our legislation are basically the same.

Mr MORRIS - Is there anything in the proposed legislative changes in relation to handguns?

Mr LLEWELLYN - Yes, there were some small matters. Firearms used in the security industry are to be restricted in calibre to .38 inch or 9mm. That is to do with handguns. Otherwise the 1996 act covers all the provisions for pistols in Tasmania as per the template. There were some major reforms in 2003, following COAG decisions, relating to barrel lengths and so on. They were incorporated in the amendment bill of 2003.

Mr WILSON - And there was a buy-back of handguns.

CHAIR - Well, I think that is it for now.

Mr WHITELEY - If we think of anything else, we can direct the correspondence to the minister.

Mr LLEWELLYN - We will leave you this documentation. There is a reference to the 2003 fact sheet and then there are those submissions about the 28-day cool-off and the young persons.

Mr WILSON - All those submissions in there address the issues of either the 28-day cooling-off period or the junior shooters.

CHAIR - Minister, I am sure we have asked the question before and we did receive some clarifications on time lines on getting some feedback on this. What is your thinking on that?

Mr LLEWELLYN - We have delayed the amendments to this bill for one reason or another over a considerable time and I have to say there is an expectation about dealing with this as soon as possible. It did occur to me that if there was a need for further amendments, if we didn't deal with the bill and some recommendations came forward fairly speedily, they might be able to be incorporated in the act when the amendments are going through the House. But it is most likely that we will subsequently deal with anything that this committee might present.

Mr WHITELEY - So if we had some recommendations, the spring session would be helpful. We do not really have any opportunity between now and then anyway.

Mr LLEWELLYN - No. If they are fairly simple recommendations, we could incorporate them pretty easily in a subsequent amendment bill.

CHAIR - We will move as smoothly as Charles will allow himself to be driven! Any other comments, Minister?

Mr LLEWELLYN - No. I thank you again for taking on this issue. It is of concern to a large number of people and it is of concern to the community as well. Therefore, in the

spirit of tripartisanship that we had in developing this legislation in the first instance, I thought it was an appropriate way of dealing with these two matters.

CHAIR - It is good for us to have the opportunity of this reference. We will work on it. Thank you very much for your time.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.