

# Interarmco's 20 mm's Turn Up All Over U.S.

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Use of those Finnish-made antitank guns in two Brink's Inc. break-ins this year is not the first time the weapons have come to the attention of law enforcement agencies.

They have been popping up in the news ever since International Armaments Corp., of Alexandria—which eventually imported 999 of the seven-foot long 20 mm. rifles—first began bringing them into the country in 1961.

One of the leading opponents of their unrestricted over-the-counter sale, which is now permissible, has been Sen. Thomas Dodd (D-Conn.). His proposed new Federal gun control laws would ban the import of such weapons.

Samuel Cummings, the expatriate president of Interarmco, contended as recently as four months ago, in testimony before a Dodd subcommittee, that the traffic in Lahtis and similar weapons should be permitted to continue because the arms have virtually no "criminal record."

Police records across the nation show:

- Notorious bank-robbers Bobby Wilcoxson and Roger Nussbaum, labeled by the FBI as "the Dillingers of the '60s" before they were finally captured, bought and test-fired two Lahtis. The weapons were hidden with a variety of other arms in an old barn in New York State when the FBI uncovered them, nipping any plans for their use in crime.

- Three New Jersey teenagers dressed in Nazi uniforms were arrested on an abandoned farm where they had been potshooting with a Lahti at farm implements and an unused farmhouse.

- On Oct. 6, residents of Tucson, Ariz., notified police

that a youth had been seen carrying what appeared to be a machine gun into his apartment. Since ownership of automatic weapons is restricted by Federal firearms laws, police obtained a warrant and searched the apartment. They found a Lahti.

Unfamiliar with the weapon, they confiscated it, took it to police headquarters, finally identified it and found that it was merely semiautomatic — the trigger had to be pulled to shoot each round.

After searching the statute books, police could find no violation of law in its over-the-counter purchase, and returned the weapon to the youth, who was a college student.

He told police that he had been using it for target practice on the desert, and had found it highly accurate at targets up to one mile.

In commenting on the use of a Lahti by safecrackers to break into the Brink's Inc. vault in Syracuse, N.Y., Dodd noted that one retail dealer in Lahtis had advertised the weapons as a "fabulous tool."

In the hearings on Dodd's gun bills earlier this year, importer Cummings said that only a very small percentage of the 566 Lahtis that had been sold at that time had been involved in incidents.

Retorted Dodd:

Do you think we have to establish crimes in order to convince you that this is a bad situation, that people should not be able to buy antitank guns?

Criminals certainly should not be able to buy them.

Do you have to have the fact that 566 were used in the commission of a crime?