

Johnson Signs the Second Bill on Gun Controls

By MARJORIE HUNTER
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 — President Johnson signed today major gun control legislation but protested that it fell far short of the strict curbs he had sought.

Passed after years of delays in Congress, the bill bans the interstate mail order sales of rifles, shotguns and all ammunition, effective Dec. 16.

Similar restrictions on handguns were included in the crime control bill passed by Congress earlier this year.

Noting that Congress had balked at his demands for registration of all guns and licensing of gun owners, the President said:

"The voices that blocked these safeguards were not the voices of an aroused nation. They were the voices of a powerful gun lobby that has prevailed for the moment in an election year."

This was taken as a reference to the anticontrol campaign mounted by the National Rifle Association, an organization of sportsmen.

Assassinations Recalled

Demands for strict gun controls flared briefly after the assassination of President Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963, and then flickered out.

The long Congressional stalemate over gun controls finally was broken after the assassination last June of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, Democrat of New York.

The President referred indirectly to the assassinations of the Kennedy brothers — and that of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. last April — when he said:

But He Says Measure Carbing the Sales of Rifles Falls Short of His Proposals

"We have been through a great deal of anguish these last few months and these last few years—too much anguish to forget so quickly.

"So now we must complete the task which this long-needed legislation begins. We have come a long way. We have made much progress—but not nearly enough."

Standing beside the President as he spoke in the Cabinet room at the White House were Treasury Secretary Henry H. Fowler, Attorney General Ramsey Clark and members of Congress who had led the fight for gun controls.

Celler Gets First Pen

The first pen used in signing the bill went to Representative Emanuel Celler, Democrat of Brooklyn, who had steered the bill through the House as chairman of the Judiciary Committee. The second went to Senator Thomas J. Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut, long-time advocate of stiff gun restrictions.

Also present was Col. John H. Glenn, the former astronaut, who headed the Emergency Committee for Gun Controls, a citizens group that obtained hundreds of thousands of signatures on petitions sent to Congress last summer.

"Today, we begin to disarm the criminal and the careless and the insane," the President began.

And touching on a major issue — law and order — of

the Presidential campaign. He continued: "All of our people who are deeply concerned in this country about law and order should hail this day."

Presumably stung by critics who charge that his Administration has been responsible for a breakdown in law and order. The President said:

"In our democracy, crime control is a community problem. We would not have it any other way. For the other way would be the police state and all of its tragic consequences."

The Federal Government, he said, "can supplement but can never supplant local efforts to combat crime in the United States."

While he described the new gun control law as the most comprehensive in the nation's history, the President said that registration and licensing were essential.

Pointing out that there are more than 160 million guns in the United States—more firearms than families—he said:

"The key to effective crime control remains, in my judgment, effective gun control. And those of us who are really concerned about crime: just must—somehow, some day—make our voices felt."

In addition to banning interstate mail order sales of long guns and all ammunition, the bill would:

☐ Restrict over-the-counter sales of firearms to out-of-state residents.

☐ Prohibit firearms sales to convicted felons, fugitives, persons under indictment, drug addicts and mental defectives.

The bill would also prohibit the sale of rifles and shotguns to persons under 18 years of age and of handguns to persons under 21.