

RIFLE GROUP SPURS FIGHT ON CONTROLS

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Asks Support in Letter Sent
to 100,000 Nonmembers

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WASHINGTON, May 13—The National Rifle Association of America, the country's leading opponent of gun control, is soliciting monetary and political support in a letter that says, "In New York City, important city officials have publicly advocated that all firearms be taken away from the city's patrolmen." 3

The letter was sent to more than 100,000 people who are not members of the association. It was written by Gen. Maxwell E. Rich, retired, executive vice president of the association. The letter outlines what it views as the perils of gun control, which is receiving new political support in Congress.

Enclosed with the letter is a four-item questionnaire to be answered on computer punch cards, and two post cards to be used by the recipient for telling his Senators his opinion of gun control.

The reference to disarming New York City policemen appears on the second page of the four-page letter in a section in which General Rich also contends that advocates of gun control really intend to "confiscate" guns.

51 Bills Await Action

"This will mean the elimination and removal of all police revolvers, all sporting rifles and target pistols owned by law-abiding citizens," the letter says.

None of the 51 bills pending

before Congress would eliminate police possession of guns or ban possession of long guns. As for New York City officials advocating that guns be taken away from policemen, the rifle association could not give the source of that statement, and a spokesman for the New York City Police Department said: "I never heard of this. I know nothing about it. It is not true."

The Federation of Greater New York Rifle and Pistol Clubs, Inc., is distributing a statement about gun control in its newsletter. The statement, concerning the constitutionality of banning handgun possession, is disputed by the person it cites.

Bingham Quoted

The statement quotes a recent radio debate between Representative Jonathan B. Bingham, Democrat of the Bronx, and the federation's lawyer, David I. Caplan. It says Mr. Bingham "recognized that an amendatory change in the Bill of Rights is necessary to support such a deprivation of the 'Right to Keep Arms' contained in the bill Mr. Bingham is supporting.

The bill calls for a ban on the manufacture, possession and sale of handguns.

Mr. Bingham denies that he said his bill would require a constitutional change.

"Our position is that a bill like ours would not offend the Second Amendment," he said.

The Second Amendment states: "A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

Mr. Bingham said that in the radio broadcast he had answered a question of Mr. Caplan by saying that if the Supreme Court ever ruled his bill unconstitutional, he would then seek a constitutional amendment.