

Half a Loaf on Guns

When it is realized that the President's Crime Commission, the Commission on Civil Disorders, the Attorney General of the United States and State Attorneys General, the Director of the F.B.I. and the International Association of Chiefs of Police all are for Federal laws banning interstate mail-order sales of rifles and shotguns, the strength of the National Rifle Association as a lobby becomes—we are sorry to say—all the more impressive.

The Administration's omnibus crime control bill (Title IV) covers handguns only. The Senate yesterday defeated Senator Edward Kennedy's amendment adding long guns. Fortunately it also defeated a substitute title by Senator Hruska of Nebraska, a friend of the rifle lobby, that would have weakened even controls on the interstate sale of pistols.

Of national crimes with firearms, 30 per cent are

committed with rifles and shotguns and 70 per cent with pistols and revolvers. Thus the bare minimum Title IV as it now stands is half a loaf and all that can be expected from this bill and session. It is clear that a major educational campaign must be started—especially among the 800,000 members of the N.R.A.—to counteract the false propaganda that controlled sales and registration would prevent responsible, law-abiding adults from purchasing and possessing firearms.

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