

New Gun Statute Sought

By VINCENT THOMAS
Assemblyman, 68th District

The second amendment to the U. S. Constitution, part of the "Bill of Rights," states that "the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." For generations this prohibition against any law which would prevent an individual from owning and carrying weapons was taken pretty much for granted. The "two-gun days" which opened our great Western Frontier brought no great problem until the 1870s, when Wyatt Earp and Bat Marterson pacified Dodge City, and the use of hand-guns in the town was banned.

Gang violence in the early years of this century brought the first statutes to require permits for the ownership of concealable weapons, and their registration with authorities. California was among the first to enact such a law. The assassination of our late President, committed as it was with a mail-order rifle, has brought renewed pressure for tightened firearm control laws. The Assembly Committee on Criminal Procedure held a one-day hearing on the problems involved.

IN STATEMENTS read to the committee, the Governor and the Attorney-General advanced several methods of tightening our state firearms laws without unduly limiting the legitimate use of guns by sportsmen. The suggestion that all firearms be registered, or that permits be required before they could be purchased was greeted with "grave doubts as to its wisdom" by the Governor.

The primary suggestion for amendment of existing law made by the two state executives was that the present waiting period before a newly bought concealable weapon may be delivered to its buyer be raised from three to five days. This waiting period is intended to give the state bureau of identification an investigation time to discover whether the purchaser is an ex-felon, narcotics addict, or non-citizen. Such people are not permitted to own hand-guns.

Other suggestions offered by the Governor include: raising the age limit for possession of a concealable weapon from 18 to 21; tighter control over possession of such weapons be made "grand theft," punishable at the court's discretion by penitentiary imprisonment; that ages and fingerprints of buyers of all such weapons be reported to the state; and that local law enforcement agencies be notified of all sales of such firearms.

THE Attorney-General recommended that rifles having barrels less than 16 inches be outlawed. One shown to the committee had a 12 inch barrel, but is now legal if not used with a clip holding more than 10 cartridges. He also urged that sheriffs and chiefs of police be allowed to issue permits to carry concealed firearms only to persons living within their own jurisdictions.

The 20 or more spokesmen for sportsmen and gun dealers who addressed the hearing agree that existing California law is adequate to deal with any problems involving use of firearms in the state. However, they expressed no objection to additional legislation aimed at preventing misuse. An official of the National Rifle Association called the existing California law one of the best in the nation.

The committee was warned that law abiding citizens may complain strongly against fingerprinting in order to secure a gun permit.

City Schedules Engineer Test

Examination for a traffic and lighting engineer will be held by the City of Torrance Dec. 12 at the Torrance Recreation Center, 3341 Torrance Blvd. Final filing date is Dec. 2.

Further information is available at the Personnel Office, City Hall, 3031 Torrance Blvd.

Botulism Hits Area Once More

By K. H. SUTHERLAND, M.D.
County Health Officer

Once again in Los Angeles a family and its dinner guests have been hospitalized with botulism after eating a home canned food. In this instance the food was home canned chili peppers. Of the seven people who tasted or ate these peppers, all had to be hospitalized, three of them dangerously ill.

What the food item was that caused the illness is not so important as the fact that the food was home canned without proper safeguards.

Botulism is an often fatal form of food poisoning. The poison comes from tiny spores produced by the botulinus bacillus. These spores, which are seed-like structures with hard, heat resistant coverings, are found in soil and therefore in most foods. The spores and the botulinus bacillus can themselves do no harm until they get into a favorable environment, especially low acid foods with no air present. Here the spores lose their hard covering, grow and manufacture their deadly toxin. Improper home canning which does not raise foods to high enough temperatures for a long enough time to destroy the spores may offer just such an opportunity.

A PERSON who eats the affected food is stricken with botulism usually within 18 to 48 hours, depending upon the size and weight of the person and the amount of toxin he has ingested.

Unlike ordinary poisoning, botulism affects the nerves, causing a spreading paralysis. The patient becomes weak, has blurred or double vision, may have difficulty swallowing and talking. On an average, about two-thirds of the people who have botulism die and usually within three to seven days.

A REVIEW of human cases of botulism in California since 1899 show that the home canned foods most often implicated in these poisonings were: home canned string beans, asparagus, corn, peas, mushrooms, peppers, figs and tomatoes. Other botulism cases and deaths were attributed to such home canned items as apricots, grape juice, lamb stew, okra, pickled fish and vegetables, pigs feet, peaches, salmon, soy bean paste, spinach, other home canned products and home cured ham.

As this list indicates, no home processed food may be considered safe unless maximum precaution is taken. In the case of canning, this means a properly operated pressure cooker is a must. Farm and Home Advisors office, 808 N. Spring St., L.A., gives information and free literature on home canning to persons who telephone MAdison 8-3383 requesting it.

People who eat home canned food are at greater risk from botulism than those who do not, as it is extremely rare that a commercially prepared food is involved in a botulism outbreak. For persons who do eat home canned food, a pamphlet on botulism is available from the Los Angeles County Health Department, Division of Health Education, 220 N. Broadway, Los Angeles 12, and will be sent to anyone who writes for it.

First Aid Class Will Meet Again

The second in a series of first aid courses to be offered in the Torrance Evening High School will begin Thursday evening at Torrance High.

The classes will meet from 7 to 9:30 in Room 106. Enrollment may be completed at the first class session.

The course is being offered in cooperation with the Red Cross. Accident prevention, emergency first aid, resuscitation, and transportation of the injured will be explained and demonstrated.

A Red Cross certificate will be issued upon satisfactory completion of the course, according to Raymond Collins, adult school principal.



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