

**3.14 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding definition of automatic weapons as “prohibited weapons”:**

[Aside] Would the Minister inform Members whether automatic weapons, such as M2 Brownings, are defined as “prohibited weapons” in accordance with Article 33(1) of the Firearms (Jersey) Law 2000, requiring the Minister’s authority, following consultation with the Connétable, before such a firearm can be purchased or transferred and, if so, on how many occasions, if any, has such permission been granted in the last 3 years?

**Senator W. Kinnard (The Minister for Home Affairs):**

Yes, Sir, provided it is understood that the Firearms Law refers to Article 33(1)(a) to firearms which are so designed or adapted that 2 or more missiles can be successively discharged without repeated pressure on the trigger. During the last 3 years, there have been 3 occasions on which permission has been granted but none were automatic weapons as defined in Article 33(1)(a). Two cases of permission relate to deactivated flame throwers, which are exhibits at the Jersey War Tunnels, and one relates to a local company which supplies component parts to the UK Ministry of Defence.

**3.14.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:**

I would not have thought a deactivated gun requires the Minister’s permission. Would she advise, given that a review of the Firearms Law has been ongoing now for, I think, 5 years, whether any new review will be made by the existing Firearms Liaison Group or a new group and if so what would it be? We know that the press has already incorrectly said that 6 persons have permission to possess heavy machine guns and they are high velocity, which is not true, so therefore would she also ensure that her Assistant Minister is properly briefed on firearms so that he in future does not inadvertently add to the current misinformation?

**Senator W. Kinnard:**

I think there is a confusion being put about here that in fact the issue that my Assistant Minister referred to was not the items referred to in the Deputy’s question just now. The weapons of concern are, in fact, a weapon known as the Steyr bolt action rifle, sometimes referred to as a single-shot machine gun, that fires a .5 Browning machine gun round. Indeed its potential effects are devastating and we are aware that there is one already licensed in the Island and we are aware there are others who do not have possession of these weapons but permission to do so.

**3.14.2 The Deputy of St. Peter:**

Would the Minister confirm that there is no such definition as a single-shot machine gun and that although this .5 calibre weapon fires what is termed as machine gun bullets, that all bullets in all guns - and the current most common bullet is a .762 - can be used in single-shot weapons for rifle target shooting as well as a weapon of war?

**Senator W. Kinnard:**

I am not a ballistics expert but clearly in reviewing the Law we will take the advice of the said ballistics experts.

**3.14.3 Deputy P.N. Troy:**

Can the Minister then confirm that all licences issued at present have been issued in accordance with the Law and the person who owns this single-shot rifle is operating within the current law?

**Senator W. Kinnard:**

Yes, Sir, and that is one of the reasons why I feel the Law must be reviewed.

**3.14.4 The Connétable of St. Ouen:**

Would the Minister confirm that at the time of the application which was made for possession of this particular firearm, Police Headquarters found nothing to mention to the Connétable about this particular firearm?

**Senator W. Kinnard:**

There was no reason for particular attention on that individual case to be drawn to their attention, as indeed it was within the Law. It is only, I think, with the situation where there are others now making applications that the red flag, if you like, popped-up to say we need to look at this more closely and, indeed, that is what has happened.

**3.14.5 Deputy S.C. Ferguson:**

I wonder if the Minister would comment on this particular Steyr 5-calibre gun. There has been a lot of talk about high-velocity and the velocity is very similar to the .303s and 762 mm which have been used at Crabbé for the last hundred years or so.

**The Bailiff:**

You must come to the question, Deputy.

**Deputy S.C. Ferguson:**

I will indeed, Sir. I wonder if the Minister could comment on the fact that the briefing note said categorically that this 50-cal firearm cannot be licensed in the UK when there is a U.K. shooting club, the Fifty Calibre Shooters Association, registered by the Home Office?

**Senator W. Kinnard:**

We are getting down to absolute detail here. As I say, I am not a ballistics expert but I would say that there are, of course, other types of weapons using that kind of ammunition. We are talking about a specific very high-performance piece of kit here, Sir, which I believe indeed can have a devastating performance against light armoured vehicles at a range of a mile, and 3 miles in the case of unprotected targets. I would query, and that is indeed why we raised with Education, Sport and Culture, whether indeed the ranges we have in Jersey are capable of really accommodating this sort of weapon.

**3.14.6 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:**

In relation to the Minister's last comment, I wonder if she is aware that it is believed that a 303 - those historic rifles - can fire bullets 7 miles and kill at 3? Would she confirm, Sir, that the single-shot rifle to which she referred 2 or 3 supplementary questions ago, is neither a machine gun nor of high-velocity?

**Senator W. Kinnard:**

I am afraid that I am not a shooter so I do not have that kind of level of detail and I would need to have notice of the question as to the technical details perhaps that the Deputy requires. I think, Sir, what we must say here is that we are trying to have a very reasonable review of the Firearms Law and part of that will be to look at which kinds of firearms we consider to be perfectly legitimate to be held in Jersey and perhaps looking at a list of those under our review that we think ought not to be legally held in Jersey. We will do that in consultation but clearly what we are concerned about here is public safety. I am aware of the very hard and rough ride that the 2000 Law had in the States. Indeed, originally the Law came in in 1995 and was thrown out at the preamble stage because of opposition from the shooting fraternity. What I would say, Sir, is that we are not trying to curtail the actions of legitimate shooting fraternity who engage in sport and obviously add value to the reputation of this Island. What we are concerned about is ensuring that public safety is uppermost in our mind. The shooting fraternity do not have anything to fear from this review but we are absolutely clear, Sir, that the review is absolutely necessary at this time.