

They Should Have Listened by Grant F

The Select Committee ignored thousands of submissions from the public of New Zealand which simply asked for more time to enable them to consider and provide input on law that affects them and their lawful property. The new Arms Act enables the confiscation of hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of private property from law abiding people (and not, as has been stated, illegally owned guns that are in the hands of gangs). The Act covers much more than just the Military Style Semi-Automatic rifles that the public have been led to believe are being removed. This is because of the magazine restrictions which cover all firearms regardless of age, calibre or action type. The new Arms Act affects not only "AK-47's" but some of the most common sporting and collectable firearms there are.

Firearms are a technically complex and specialised area of knowledge and instead of taking advice from people who know this area, the select committee chose to listen to the Police Association instead of you. This has led to the new arms act prohibiting all centre fire semi-automatic rifles regardless of calibre, all rimfire rifles (not just semi-automatic) that hold more than ten cartridges, and any other action that holds more than ten cartridges. Shotguns are limited to five rounds.

The result is that rifles, "born as" as hunting rifles which are semi-automatic are banned. For example, Ruger Mini 14's and 30's, Remington Woodmasters and the Browning BAR are now illegal. The Browning BAR for example, in .300 Win Mag built from the ground up for only hunting, with no military use whatsoever is gone. The common SKS (frequently the only new centrefire rifle affordable for a person on restricted means) is banned even with an internal 5 cartridge magazine.

Virtually all .22's in common use are banned. This means the Stirling .22, and the Gevarm semi-automatic .22 rifles are gone. It also means Browning and Miruku lever action .22's are history. It means that Winchester and Marlin 39a .22's are unauthorised. The Sportsman 15 BSA bolt action .22 is now illegal.

Most pistol calibre lever action rifles are banned. This includes the whole range of Winchester and Rossi lever action rifles. It also means that virtually all .357 and .44 magnum pig hunting carbines are outside the law. An original 66 Henry rifle (worth \$60,000) and its modern reproductions are banned- at about \$2,000-\$3,000 each.

Pump action .22 rifles are also banned. This includes that old Browning pump and Winchester "gallery gun" you may have inherited from your father.



Entire disciplines- service rifle shooting and international three gun shooting have come to an end. Other disciplines, such as cowboy action shooting will no longer be able to continue to an international standard. "E" endorsed licence service rifle shooters- amongst the most scrutinised people in the Country- now cannot compete or practice.

Vast amounts of items related to shooting disciplines are forbidden or worthless. Slings, sights, spare parts, reloading gear, safes are now all of no use. A highly expensive ACOG sight is nearly useless on anything other than a semi-automatic. There is no value in .30 carbine ammunition if you cannot own the rifle to fire it. Only a handful of bolt guns fire .300 blackout, so what about the thousands of rounds for the now out of bounds AR type rifles? Will you get paid for that which you paid for as a result of working hard? We don't know.

The loss of heritage as a result of the destruction of historically significant firearms is unknown. There can be no doubt that rifles that are rare and valuable will be destroyed. There seems to be no opportunity at this time for these rifles to be retained, or transferred to a “C” licence holder if you are not an existing endorsed licence holder. There are German STG 44 rifles held on “E” category . A single original magazine is worth \$600. A rare Rock-Ola M1 Carbine cannot be legally fired even by a reenactor. There is no doubt that firearms of enormous sentimental value can no longer be fired. If you inherited a prohibited rifle from your grandfather, then you have to give it to the Government who will decide what it is worth.

The betrayal of the relationship between the Government and the people should cause everyone concern. The government’s role is to protect the people and property of its Country. Could anyone seriously say that outlawing a 125 year old lever action rifle, held by a fit and proper collector with appropriate security makes the Country any safer?

There is no doubt that registration will lead to confiscation. We have seen that with existing “E” category rifles. Even though the terrorist did not use a legally held and registered “E” category rifle, the highly scrutinised “E” category firearms owner have had their property confiscated. Registration *always* leads to confiscation as has just happened.

The actual cost of this ill thought and horrible fiasco caused by not listening remains to be seen. As well as the cost of the firearms, there is the cost of administration, IT, wages, mileage, storage, security, and destruction, as well as legal challenges to values decided. And decided by who? Every second the Police spend scooping up firearms from people who have done nothing wrong is time they do not use to protect the community. Every hour the Police spend enforcing the new laws, they are not investigating burglaries or helping the victims of domestic violence.

Every single cent spent on the confiscation and the administration of this is a cent that is not used on roads, regional development, wage increases for nurses and teachers, and fixing our road system. One high end AR15 would pay for cataract surgery for an elderly person. One high end lever action rifle would pay for life saving drugs for someone with cancer.

What’s next? Pistol shooting? Military calibres? Precision/varmint rifles that look like sniper rifles? This maybe in the Second Arms Act scheduled for later in the year. They will listen then.

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Many of the above are now “Prohibited”