

The following Bill, which will in due course be presented to the House of Representatives for enactment, is published for general information.

## FIREARMS ORDINANCE, 1957

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- Part I—Prohibited firearms.
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## A BILL

FOR

AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE PROVISION FOR REGULATING THE POSSESSION OF AND DEALING IN FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION INCLUDING MUZZLE-LOADING FIREARMS, AND FOR MATTERS ANCILLARY THERETO.

[By Notice—see Section 1]

BE IT ENACTED by the Legislature of the Federation of Nigeria as follows :—

### PART I—INTRODUCTORY

1. (1) This Ordinance may be cited as the Firearms Ordinance, 1958, and shall come into operation upon a date to be appointed by the Governor-General by notification in the *Gazette*.

(2) This Ordinance shall have effect throughout the Federation, and in respect of any reference to a Region or a Regional authority shall except where the context otherwise requires apply to and in respect of Lagos and the Southern Cameroons as though they were Regions.

Title.

Commence-  
ment.

Enactment.

Short title,  
commence-  
ment and  
application.

Interpretation.

2. In this Ordinance, except where the context otherwise requires—

"ammunition" means ammunition for any firearm and any component part of any such ammunition, but does not include gun powder or trade powder not intended or used as such a component part;

"firearm" means any lethal barrelled weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged, and includes a prohibited firearm, a personal firearm and a muzzle-loading firearm of any of the categories referred to in Parts I, II and III respectively of the Schedule hereto, and any component part of any such firearm;

Schedule.

"public armoury" means a place or building established or recognised as a public armoury in accordance with section 14.

#### PART II—LICENSING

Prohibited firearms.  
Schedule,  
Part I.

3. No person shall have in his possession or under his control any firearm of one of the categories specified in Part I of the Schedule hereto (hereinafter referred to as a prohibited firearm) except in accordance with a licence granted by the Governor-General acting in his discretion.

Personal firearms.  
Schedule,  
Part II.

4. No person shall have in his possession or under his control any firearm of one of the categories specified in Part II of the Schedule (hereinafter referred to as a personal firearm) except in accordance with a licence granted in respect thereof by the Inspector-General of Police, which licences shall be granted or refused in accordance with principles decided upon by the Governor-General in Council.

Muzzle-loading firearms may be prohibited except under licence.

5. (1) This section shall not have effect in respect of the Federal Territory of Lagos.

Schedule,  
Part III.

(2) The Commissioner of Police of a Region, with the consent of the Governor of the Region in respect of the Region or any part thereof, and the Inspector-General of Police with the consent of the Commissioner of the Cameroons in respect of the Southern Cameroons or any part thereof, may by order prohibit the possession or control of any firearm of the categories specified in Part III of the Schedule (hereinafter referred to as a muzzle-loading firearm) without the licence of an authority to be specified in such order.

(3) Upon the making of an order under subsection (2) no person shall within any area specified in such order have in his possession or under his control a muzzle-loading firearm without a licence granted in respect thereof by the appropriate authority in accordance with regulations made under section 33.

(4) An authority specified in an order made under subsection (2) shall render such periodical returns as may be required by regulations.

(5) The grant of a licence in respect of a muzzle-loading firearm in respect of which application has been duly made shall not be refused except for one of the reasons specified in subsection (2) of section 7.

Muzzle-loading firearms prohibited in Lagos except under licence.

6. No person shall within the Federal territory of Lagos have in his possession or under his control a muzzle-loading firearm without a licence from the Inspector-General of Police.

7. (1) Subject to the provisions of subsection 5 of section 5, no person shall, as of right, be entitled to the grant of any licence or permit under this Ordinance, and the authority having the function of granting such licence or permit may without being bound to assign any reason therefor refuse the grant of such licence or permit or, subject to the provisions of any regulations made under section 33, may impose such terms or conditions as he may think fit, and may revoke such licence or permit for such cause as he may consider appropriate: Provided that any person aggrieved by any such decision, other than a decision by the Governor-General, may appeal in writing to the Governor-General acting in his discretion whose decision thereon shall be final.

Licences and permits etc. not granted as of right.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (1), no licence or permit under the provisions of this Ordinance shall be granted if there is reason to believe that the applicant or holder of the licence—

- (a) is under the age of seventeen;
- (b) is of unsound mind;
- (c) is not fit to have possession of the firearm in question on account of defective eyesight;
- (d) is a person of intemperate habits;
- (e) has during the previous five years been convicted of an offence involving violence or the threat of violence.

8. (1) The owner of a firearm in respect of which a licence or permit has been granted in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance shall be responsible for the safe custody of the firearm to which the licence or permit relates.

Safe custody of firearms.

(2) The owner of such firearm, in the case of loss, theft or destruction of such firearm, shall notify such loss, theft or destruction and the circumstances thereof within fourteen days of being aware thereof to the authority who issued the licence or permit, and shall at the same time surrender the licence or permit for such action as such authority may consider necessary.

(3) Upon the death of the holder of a licence or permit a person lawfully in possession of the chattels of the deceased or a person to whom a firearm or ammunition therefor has been bequeathed may notwithstanding any other provision of this Ordinance lawfully have in his possession a firearm or ammunition in respect of which the deceased person held a licence or permit for a period of fourteen days after such death: Provided that the Inspector-General of Police may if he thinks fit seize such firearm or ammunition and retain or deposit the same in a public armoury until a licence or permit shall have been granted in respect thereof.

9. (1) No person shall have in his possession or under his control any ammunition in respect of any firearm referred to in the Schedule except in accordance with the terms of a licence or permit granted to him and in force in respect of such firearm.

Ammunition

(2) This section shall apply in respect of all ammunition as defined in section 2, except—

(a) ammunition for a muzzle-loading firearm in the possession or under the control of a person outside Lagos and in any area not for the time being the subject of an order in accordance with section 5;

(b) lead shot for use only as a weight or weights;

(c) blank cartridges (other than those for humane killers) not exceeding one inch in diameter.

## PART III.—SALE AND TRANSFER

Prohibition on dealing in arms or ammunition except by registered dealer.

10. (1) No person shall by way of trade or business buy or sell or transfer or expose for sale or transfer or have in his possession for sale or transfer any firearm unless he is registered as a firearms dealer.

(2) No person shall by way of trade or business buy or sell or transfer or expose for sale or transfer or have in his possession for sale or transfer any ammunition, other than the ammunition specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (2) of section 9, unless he is registered as a firearms dealer.

(3) For the purpose of this section the Inspector-General of Police shall cause to be kept a register or registers of firearms dealers and shall upon due application enter therein the name of any person applying to be registered and each place where such person carries on business as such dealer: Provided that no registration shall take place, and a registration which has taken place shall be cancelled—

(a) If the officer in charge of the register is satisfied that the applicant cannot be permitted to carry on business as a firearms dealer without danger to the public safety or the peace, or

(b) in respect of any premises which do not comply with the requirements prescribed by regulations made under section 33.

(4) The Governor-General in Council may without being bound to assign any reason therefor direct that registration in accordance with this section shall not take place in respect of any person or persons, or in respect of any place or area, and may in like manner direct that any such registration shall be cancelled.

Registered dealers' armouries.

11. (1) A registered firearms dealer shall construct in accordance with the requirements prescribed by regulations under section 33 and maintain in proper repair an armoury at each place in respect of which he carries on business.

(2) A registered firearms dealer shall keep up to date at each place where he carries on business such records and shall make such returns in respect thereof as may be prescribed.

(3) A registered firearms dealer, in the case of loss, theft or destruction of a firearm in his possession, shall notify such loss, theft or destruction as soon as possible and in any case within seven days thereof to the Inspector-General of Police.

(4) A registered firearms dealer shall permit inspection of each place where he carries on business and the records maintained thereat by a police officer upon production by such officer of the written authority of the Inspector-General of Police.

Sale only to person holding licence.

12. No person, whether a registered firearms dealer or not, shall sell or transfer any firearm or ammunition to any person other than to another registered firearms dealer (and then only after prior notification by both dealers to the Inspector-General of Police) without the production of a licence or permit by such person authorising the possession of such firearm or ammunition: Provided that regulations made in accordance with section 33 may permit the sale or transfer of a firearm or ammunition by a registered firearms dealer to a person not the holder of a licence or permit intending to obtain such licence or permit in another part of Nigeria, upon conditions to be prescribed in such regulations.



13. (1) No person, whether a registered firearms dealer or not, shall sell or transfer any firearm unless there shall have been stamped permanently thereon the maker's name and number or such other particulars as may be prescribed, and unless such name or number is specified in any licence or permit produced in accordance with section 12.

Stamping of all firearms sold.

(2) No person, whether a registered firearms dealer or not, shall alter or render illegible the maker's name or number or other prescribed particulars stamped upon a firearm without the previous consent in writing of the Inspector-General of Police.

#### PART IV—PUBLIC ARMOURIES

14. The Governor-General may by notice in the *Gazette* establish or recognise public armouries for the deposit of firearms and ammunition and prescribe the officers to be in charge thereof.

Establishment of public armouries.

15. Firearms and ammunition may be deposited in a public armoury in accordance with regulations made under section 33 and shall not be withdrawn therefrom save in accordance with such regulations.

Deposit in and withdrawal from public armoury.

16. (1) No firearm or ammunition shall remain deposited in a public armoury for a period in excess of eighteen months.

Disposal in certain cases of deposited arms or ammunition.

(2) No firearm or ammunition shall remain deposited in public armoury for a period exceeding two months after an application for a licence in respect thereof has been refused, or after a licence in respect of the same has been revoked.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (1) and (2), the officer in charge of a public armoury may in his discretion in either such case permit deposit for a further period not exceeding twelve months if in his opinion the owner has the intention of removing or disposing of such firearm or ammunition lawfully and is likely to have an opportunity to do so.

(4) After giving two months' notice in the *Gazette* of his intention to do so, the officer in charge of a public armoury may, in such manner as may be directed by the Inspector-General of Police, dispose of any firearm or ammunition—

(a) which is deposited in contravention of subsections (1) or (2), as modified by subsection (3); or

(b) upon which the fees for such deposit have been unpaid for three months; or

(c) of which the owner is unknown or within four weeks does not reply to an enquiry posted to his last known address.

17. (1) The Inspector-General of Police and the officer in charge of a public armoury shall not be responsible for any deterioration or damage caused to any firearm or ammunition deposited in a public armoury, but in manner to be prescribed by regulations shall permit the owner and any person authorised by the owner to have access if he so requires for the purpose of inspection, cleaning or maintenance of a firearm or of ammunition therefor.

Damage or loss.

(2) No compensation shall be made to the owner of any firearms or ammunition deposited in a public armoury by reason of any damage occasioned thereto by any natural or accidental cause.

## PART V—IMPORT AND EXPORT

Import and export through prescribed ports.  
L.N. 108 of 1955.

18. No person shall import any firearms or ammunition into Nigeria by sea or by air or export the same therefrom by sea or by air except through a port which is a port for the purposes of the customs laws or an airport duly designated under Article 60 of the Colonial Air Navigation Order, 1955, nor import or export the same by land except through a prescribed town adjacent to the land frontier or by the shortest route from the nearest part of the frontier to such a prescribed town.

Import and export of prohibited firearms and ammunition.

19. No person shall import or cause to be imported or export or cause to be exported any firearms referred to in Part I of the Schedule or ammunition therefor except in accordance with a licence duly granted by the Governor-General who may grant or refuse the same in his discretion and impose such terms and conditions as he may think fit.

Restriction on import of personal firearms and ammunition.

20. No person shall import or cause to be imported any firearms or ammunition referred to in Part II or Part III of the Schedule unless he declares the same to a customs officer or other prescribed officer at the time of importation and—

(a) unless he produces to such customs officer or other prescribed officer a licence to possess such firearms or ammunition; or

(b) he imports the same as part of his personal effects and completes a prescribed form of declaration that his destination is within Nigeria but is in excess of twenty miles from the place of importation and that he will surrender such firearm or ammunition to a specified authority or at a public armoury at or near his destination in accordance with such declaration and with the terms of a permit for temporary possession thereof to be issued by the Inspector-General of Police: Provided that the Inspector-General of Police may in his discretion require the surrender of such firearm or ammunition for the purpose of transmission by official channels to such specified authority or public armoury; or

(c) he imports the same as part of his personal effects and is in transit to some country outside Nigeria and either surrenders the same to the customs or police authority while he is in Nigeria or obtains a permit for temporary possession during such period of transit; or

(d) he is a registered firearms dealer, or a person referred to in paragraph (c), (d) or (e) of subsection (2) of section 38, and imports the same in accordance with an import licence duly granted by the Inspector-General of Police who may grant or refuse the same in his discretion, subject to a like appeal as that provided for in section 7, and who may impose such terms and conditions as he may think fit; or

(e) he gives an undertaking in writing that he will forthwith apply for a licence in accordance with section 4 and surrenders such firearm or ammunition for deposit in a public armoury pending a decision upon such application.

Import by post prohibited.

21. No person shall import or cause to be imported any firearms or ammunition by post.

Restrictions on export of firearms and ammunition.

22. No person shall export or cause to be exported any firearms or ammunition referred to in Part II or Part III of the Schedule unless he declares the same to a customs officer or other prescribed officer at the time



of export and produces the licence or permit held in respect thereof for surrender or endorsement, or otherwise satisfies such customs or other prescribed officer that he is lawfully in possession thereof.

#### PART VI—MANUFACTURE AND REPAIR OF ARMS

23. Subject to the provisions of sections 24 to 26 no person shall manufacture, assemble or repair any firearms or ammunition except at a public armoury or at arsenals established for the purposes of the armed forces of the Crown with the consent of the Governor-General, acting in his discretion.

Manufacture prohibited.

24. The Inspector-General of Police may in his discretion grant a permit to any person to carry on the business of repairing firearms referred to in Part II of the Schedule, and shall maintain a register of such permits in force.

Permits for repair of personal firearms.

25. The Inspector-General may, with the consent of the Governor of the Region, and with the consent of the Commissioner of the Cameroons in case of the Southern Cameroons, in his discretion grant a permit to any person to carry on the business of manufacture and repair of the firearms referred to in Part III of the Schedule, and shall maintain a register of such permits in force.

Permits for repair of muzzle-loading firearms.

26. A registered firearms dealer shall be deemed to be the holder of a permit for the repair of the weapons referred to in Parts II and III of the Schedule subject to any conditions prescribed by regulations.

Dealer may repair.

27. No person shall shorten the barrel of a smooth-bore firearm to a length of less than twenty inches from the muzzle to the point at which the charge is exploded on firing, and no person shall have in his possession or under his control any smooth-bore firearm which has been so shortened, or manufacture a smooth-bore firearm having such a barrel of less than twenty inches.

Shortening smooth-bore firearms prohibited.

#### PART VII—ENFORCEMENT OF ORDINANCE

28. A person who contravenes any of the provisions of sections 3, 4, 5 (3), 6, 8 (2), 9, 10 (1), 11 to 13, 18 to 22, 23 or 27 shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction be liable to a fine of two hundred pounds or imprisonment for twelve months or to both such fine and imprisonment, and in addition the court may order the forfeiture of any firearm or ammunition to which the offence relates unless such firearm or ammunition appears to be the property of a person not privy to the offence, and any such forfeited firearm or ammunition shall be disposed of in accordance with the instructions of the Inspector-General of Police.

Penalties.

29. The Governor-General in his discretion may award to any person who shall have contributed to the conviction of any offender against this Ordinance or the regulations by giving information or otherwise such sum, not exceeding one half of any fine imposed, as he may think fit, and where imprisonment is imposed as an alternative or in default of payment of such a fine the Governor-General may in his discretion award such payment to be made from the general revenue of the Federation.

Reward to informer.

30. The holder of any licence or permit granted in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance shall produce the same, and if so required any firearm or ammunition to which such licence or permit relates, upon the request of a police officer, and in default shall be liable upon conviction to a fine of fifty pounds or imprisonment for six months.

Production of licence.

Power to  
break open  
container  
Cap. 43.

31. An officer executing a search warrant under the Criminal Procedure Ordinance may open and if necessary break open any container upon the premises the subject of the warrant for the purpose of ascertaining whether any firearm or ammunition is contained therein, and the officer in charge of a public armoury shall have similar power for a similar purpose in respect of any container in a public armoury.

Protection of  
public  
officers.

32. The prescribed authorities and officers in charge of public armouries in Nigeria are hereby authorised and empowered to take all such necessary action and to do all such things as the efficient execution of any of the provisions of this Ordinance may reasonably require, and no action, suit or civil proceedings of any kind whatsoever shall, without the written consent of the Attorney-General of the Federation, be brought against any person in any court for damages or compensation in respect of any measures or acts which may be taken or done in the execution or intended execution of the duties of any such prescribed authority or officer.

#### PART VIII—REGULATIONS AND OTHER POWERS

Power to  
make regula-  
tions.

33. (1) The Governor-General, after consultation with the Council of Ministers, may by regulations provide for—

(a) the method of application for and the terms and conditions which shall be attached to any licence or permit granted, and to any registration effected, under this Ordinance, and the renewal and revocation of any such licence, permit or registration;

(b) the records which shall be kept and returns to be made by a registered firearms dealer;

(c) the records which shall be kept and returns to be made by authorities granting licences in respect of muzzle-loading firearms;

(d) requirements as to the buildings in which a registered firearms dealer shall carry on his business, and as to the structural and safety and security requirements of an armoury maintained by a dealer;

(e) the procedure upon sale or transfer by a registered firearms dealer of firearms or ammunition which will be subject to licensing procedure in another part of Nigeria;

(f) the stamping or marking of firearms and the method thereof;

(g) the conditions or circumstances in which deposit must be made or may be made in a public armoury and the conditions of and method for withdrawal therefrom;

(h) the conditions under which the provisions of this Ordinance may be modified in respect of rifle clubs in accordance with section 38;

(i) the total or partial exemption from the provisions of this Ordinance of any type of air-gun, air-rifle or air-pistol (and ammunition therefor) the use or possession of which is considered to involve no danger or little danger, and any conditions to be attached to such exemption;

(j) prescribing anything which by this Ordinance has to be prescribed;

(k) prescribing forms;

(l) subject to subsections (2) and (3), prescribing fees or minimum fees; and generally for the better carrying out of the purposes of this Ordinance.

(2) The Governor in Council of a Region, and the Governor-General acting in his discretion in respect of the Southern Cameroons, may by regulations provide for the fees to be paid in respect of the licensing of personal firearms in the Region and in the Southern Cameroons respectively.

(3) The proceeds of any fees in respect of the licensing of muzzle-loading firearms in accordance with section 5 shall be retained by the authority collecting such fees in augmentation of the funds of such authority.

34. The Governor-General, after consultation with the Council of Ministers, may by order amend any part of the Schedule.

Power to  
amend  
Schedule.  
Delegation.

35. The Inspector-General may by notice in the *Gazette* delegate all or any of the powers or duties conferred upon him by this Ordinance, other than this power of delegation, to any police officer or police officers, subject to such conditions, exceptions and qualifications and in respect of such parts of the Federation as may therein be prescribed, and during the period of such as delegation a reference in this Ordinance to the Inspector-General of Police shall be deemed to include a reference to any police officer or police officers to whom the relevant power or duty has been delegated.

36. (1) The Governor-General if he thinks fit may at any time by proclamation prohibit the possession of or dealing in any firearms or ammunition, either throughout the Federation or in any part thereof, and either absolutely or except subject to such restrictions or conditions as may be specified.

Governor-General may  
prohibit  
possession  
or dealing.

(2) A proclamation under subsection (1) may require the surrender of firearms and ammunition within a specified time and to a specified authority, and any person neglecting to make such surrender, or being in possession of or dealing in any firearm or ammunition during the period that such proclamation is in force, shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to a penalty of five hundred pounds or imprisonment for two years, or to both such fine and imprisonment.

37. A police officer may seize any firearm or ammunition of which the owner is unknown or cannot be traced, and shall in such case deposit the same in a public armoury.

Seizure of  
unclaimed  
arms and  
ammunition.

#### PART IX—SAVINGS AND REPEAL

38. (1) The provisions of this section shall have effect notwithstanding the provisions of Part II of this Ordinance.

(2) A person specified in any of the following paragraphs, subject to any limitation specified in such paragraph, may acquire or have in his possession a firearm and ammunition therefor without having a firearms licence, whilst such firearm or ammunition is not used for other than the specified purpose or other than its proper purpose—

Exemption  
from  
necessity for  
firearms  
licence.

(a) a registered firearms dealer, or person employed by him, in respect of a firearm or ammunition therefor acquired in his possession in the ordinary course of business;

(b) the holder of a permit for the manufacture or repair of firearms, subject to the terms of such permit, and in respect of a firearm or ammunition therefor acquired or in his possession in the ordinary course of business;

(c) a person requiring to use a riveting gun, or mechanical tool of some other nature which may come within the definition of a firearm in respect of such gun or other tool;

(d) a person on board a ship or aircraft, or at a port or aerodrome, in respect of signalling apparatus necessary for such ship or aircraft, or necessary at such port or aerodrome;

(e) a member of a rifle club approved by the Inspector-General of Police, or of a unit of a cadet force so approved, when engaged as such a member in drill or target practice or under instruction in respect of any firearm or ammunition necessary for such drill or practice;

(f) a person taking part in the production of a theatrical or cinematograph performance in respect of a firearm or ammunition necessary for such purpose;

(g) a person having a firearm or ammunition for the purpose of starting events at an athletic meeting in respect of a firearm or ammunition designed for such purpose;

(h) a person having a firearm or ammunition therefor designed for the capture of fish by a diver under water in respect of such firearm or ammunition.

Armed forces  
and police.

39. The provisions of this Ordinance shall not apply to any member of the armed forces of the United Kingdom or of the Federation, or to a member of the police force, in relation to any firearm or ammunition issued to him for official purposes, and an officer of such armed forces or of the police force shall, if the Inspector-General is satisfied that he is required to purchase or acquire a firearm or ammunition therefor for his own use in his capacity as such officer, be entitled without payment of any fee to the grant of a licence therefor.

Repeal Cap.  
14 No. 14 of  
1942. No.  
28 of 1947.

40. The Arms Ordinance (Chapter 14 of the Revised Edition of the Laws, 1948), the Arms Ordinance, 1942, and the Explosives (Import, Control and Sale) Ordinance, 1947, are repealed.

Transitional.  
(Chapter  
14 of the  
Edition of  
the Laws,  
1948).

41. Any licence or permit granted in accordance with the Arms Ordinance or the Explosives (Import, Control and Sale) Ordinance, 1949, shall for a period of twelve months after the date that this Ordinance comes into operation or for the period for which such licence or permit was granted (whichever shall sooner expire) shall be as valid and effectual as though granted in accordance with this Ordinance.

## SCHEDULE

(Sections 2, 3-5, 9, 24-26, 34)

### PART I—PROHIBITED FIREARMS

1. Heavy artillery of all kinds.
2. Apparatus for the discharge of any explosive or gas diffusing projectile.
3. Rocket weapons.
4. Bombs and grenades.
5. Machine-guns and machine-pistols.
6. Military rifles, namely those of calibres—7.62 mm. and .303 inches.
7. Revolvers and pistols whether rifled or unrifled (including flint-lock pistols and cap pistols).
8. Any other firearm not specified in Part II or Part III of this Schedule.

### PART II—PERSONAL FIREARMS

1. Shotguns.
2. Sporting rifles, namely rifles of calibres other than those specified in Item 6 of Part I.
3. Air-guns, air-rifles or air-pistols.
4. Humane killers of the captive bolt type.

### PART III—MUZZLE-LOADING FIREARMS

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dane-guns</li> <li>2. Flint-lock guns</li> <li>3. Cap guns</li> </ol> | } | All being unrifled and muzzle-loading. |
|---|---|--|

*Objects and Reasons*

This is a Bill to repeal and replace the Arms Ordinance which is at present in force (Chapter 14 of the Revised Edition), which was enacted in 1922 and which is not appropriate to present conditions, not convenient to administer.

2. The Bill has amongst its objects provision for the licensing of dane guns and similar muzzle-loading weapons in any Region or in part thereof where the Government of the Region consider it appropriate. The Ordinance now in force did not apply to flint-lock guns with unrifled barrels which were lawfully in Nigeria when the Ordinance was enacted, but, as disproof of such existence was rarely practicable, the main provisions of the Ordinance have not in recent years been treated as applicable to muzzle-loading weapons.

3. *Clause 2* of the Bill defines a firearm as meaning any lethal barrelled weapon capable of discharging a missile, (which will include air guns, air rifles and air pistols, although there will be power by regulations to relax provisions as to licensing in respect of the less dangerous types of these weapons).

4. The Bill provides (Clauses 3 to 5) for the division of firearms into three categories. The categories are set out in the *Schedule* to the Bill and the nomenclature allocated is—

(a) *prohibited firearms* : these comprise weapons of war, rifles of military type and revolvers and pistols ; their possession is not completely prohibited but the licence of the Governor-General will be required ;

(b) *personal firearms* : these comprise shot guns and other hunting and sporting weapons, and air guns and air rifles ; the possession of firearms of this category will need a licence from or given on behalf of the Inspector-General of Police ; (there is power by regulation to exempt air-guns, etc., of a type considered to be harmless) ;

(c) *muzzle-loading firearms* : this category includes all unrifled guns such as dane guns, flint-lock guns and cap guns ; no control will take place unless the Governor of the Region agrees that it is appropriate, and in the order there may be specified the authority who will issue licences. The authority is in appropriate cases likely to be the Native Authority concerned. Apart from certain restrictions relating to specified disabilities such as defective eyesight (*Clause 7*), however, licences will be granted as of right. The virtue of the provision lies in the fact that records, which are not available now, will be available as to the number and location of muzzle-loading weapons, and control will be possible if ever it should be required. Within Lagos a muzzle-loading weapon will be treated in the same manner as a personal firearm and the grant of a licence will be discretionary (*Clause 6*). *Clause 7* provides for appeal to the Governor-General in the event of refusal of a licence. There are provisions for the safe custody of a licensed firearm (*Clause 8*), and *Clause 9* applies the provisions of this Part to ammunition.

5. Part III of the Bill provides for sale and transfer by providing a system of registration of dealers on the same lines as the system in the existing Ordinance. What has in the past been known as a private arms warehouse maintained by a dealer will be known as an armoury. Part IV provides for public armouries, until now known as public warehouses.

6. Part V regulates import and export, and continues (*Clause 20*) a procedure whereby a person entering Nigeria at a port in transit to another part of Nigeria may be permitted to retain a firearm in his possession subject to safeguards designed to ensure that application for a licence shall be made in the district of his destination.

7. Part VI provides for registration of repairers of firearms and of the places where they operate. It has provision for licensing the making of dane guns and similar guns (*Clause 25*) which is new. The shortening of shot guns to a barrel length of less than twenty inches and the manufacture of the same is prohibited (*Clause 27*).

8. *Clause 28* provides penalties for breach of specific sections of the proposed Ordinance, and for forfeiture of weapons the subject of an offence. Provisions in this Part (*Part VII*) as to rewards, production of licences and protection of public officers do not differ from the existing law, but *Clause 31*, permitting the breaking open of containers when the existence of illegal arms is suspected, is new.



9. There is provision in *Clause 33* for the making of regulations on many administrative matters, including the levying of fees, and provision that where fees are to be paid in respect of muzzle-loading firearms they may be retained by the authority collecting them (it is anticipated that local government bodies and native authorities will effect the licensing). *Clause 26* reflects the existing provision whereby possession of arms may be prohibited by proclamation. *Clause 35* sets out a power for the Inspector-General of Police to delegate, and *Clause 37* provides for deposit of seized arms in a public armoury.

10. *Clause 38* lists a number of exemptions which are necessary to provide for such matters as signalling equipment, and *Clause 39* exempts members of the armed forces and the police force in respect of official arms.

11. The existing Arms Ordinance (Chapter 14) is repealed (*Clause 40*), together with the Arms Ordinance, 1942 (an abortive replacement for Chapter 14 which was found to be unsatisfactory and not brought into operation), and together with the Explosives (Import, Control and Sale) Ordinance, 1947, which was enacted to provide an interim measure of control. *Clause 41* preserves the validity of existing licences during the period for which they have been issued.

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