

## DAIRY INDUSTRY BILL.

Second reading.

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. Cowan)—This Bill differs in a number of points from the measure which was before Parliament last session. During the recess the Bill has been carefully revised and parts omitted; the constitution of the proposed Appeal Board has been altered, and a number of suggestions from persons interested in the industry have been considered, and, where necessary, the Bill has been altered to give effect to them. Further, it will be remembered that under last year's Bill the proposed Government control of the dairy industry admittedly overlapped with the existing control by local health authorities. Under this year's Bill that overlapping has been removed. By clause 3 it is now provided that the Bill will not apply to any dairy farm within the metropolitan area. These dairy farms are almost without exception engaged in producing milk for retail sale, and are therefore at present under the supervision of the Metropolitan County Board of Health. They will remain under that supervision. Further, clause 3 provides in effect that outside the metropolitan area the only dairies subject to the Bill are those from which milk is supplied in bulk to a factory or a milk vendor, or the milk from which is used in manufacturing dairy produce. The dairies of the small retail vendors throughout the State will therefore remain under the control of the local authorities of health. The Bill therefore in its present form will enable the Government to supervise the dairy industry throughout the State with the exception of the retail milk supply. The proposed supervision has three objects—firstly, to safeguard public health; secondly, to improve the quality of dairy produce; and, thirdly, to ensure to the dairymen a proper return for their products. As I mentioned before, a certain amount of supervision of the dairy industry is already being carried out by county boards of health and other local authorities of health under the Food and Drugs Act, 1908, and the Health Act, 1898. Under these Acts, however, no supervision is exercised over the dairyman who produces milk for manufacture into butter or cheese. The existing supervision is almost exclusively concerned with production of milk for retail selling and with such retail selling. The Bill is concerned with the supervision of dairies producing milk for manufacture into butter and cheese, and of dairy produce for

eries and creameries. I shall now outline the main provisions of the measure. The Bill will be administered by the dairy instruction branch of the Department of Agriculture. It may be admitted that certain additional officers will be necessary to carry out the Act. It is estimated that four additional dairy supervisors will be required and one instructor. The total cost for salaries and expenses of these officers will probably be about £3,000 per annum.

The Hon. W. G. Duncan—Where are you going to put them—on the West Coast?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—Well, if the honorable member had a knowledge of the dairying industry in South Australia I am quite sure he would not put such a question, because there is very little dairying on the West Coast.

The Hon. W. G. Duncan—But inspectors have been over there.

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—I am looking forward to the time when quite a large quantity of dairy produce will be supplied from Eyre Peninsula.

The Hon. W. G. Duncan—Port Lincoln freezing works?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—Yes, the industry would be helpful to the Port Lincoln freezing works, erected at great cost provided by the Government.

The Hon. W. Morrow—And without Government supervision.

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—I do not know why the honorable member should make that interjection, because last year he accused the Government of having had the whole of the supervision of Port Lincoln works.

The Hon. W. Morrow—Oh, no. The report shows that Government supervision was lacking.

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—In a debate on the dairy industry we do not want to introduce questions affecting the Port Lincoln freezing works, except to say that, in his charges against the Government last year, Mr. Morrow was entirely wrong, a fact which has been proved by the investigation that has since been made.

The Hon. W. Morrow—The Committee did not say so.

The Hon. J. Jelley—It went close up to saying so.

The Hon. W. Morrow—It was a Scotch verdict—not proven.

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—The charges made by Mr. Morrow were not upheld.

The Hon. W. Morrow—They were not proven.

The Hon. J. Jelley—The Committee let you down very lightly.

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—I was saying that the officers necessary for the administration of this Act would involve an expenditure of £3,000 per annum.

The Hon. W. G. Duncan—That is for a start.

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—That is quite correct because as the dairy industry progresses, as I am sure it will under this legislation, additional officers may be required.

The Hon. W. G. Duncan—But you were sure under the last Bill, and you now say that this Bill is a better one.

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—I admit that. The expenditure I have referred to will be more than offset by the revenue derived from the licence fees under the Bill; and if the Bill is as successful in its operation in this State as are the Acts of Victoria and New South Wales in those States, the comparatively small cost of administration will be a low price to pay for the great improvement in the products of the dairy industry. The Bill provides for one inspector to be a qualified veterinary surgeon and another to be an expert in dairying. Inspectors under the Bill are to have all the powers of an inspector under the Stock Diseases Act, so far as concerns animals at a dairy farm.

The Hon. T. Pascoe—Will that part apply to the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—No, this Bill will not apply to the metropolitan area at all.

The Hon. T. Gluyas—Why not?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—Because last year there was so much objection to such legislation applying to the metropolitan area that the Government thought it advisable, in order to get a Bill of this kind through, to exempt the metropolitan area.

The Hon. W. G. Duncan—Is that the bait to get it through?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—There are no baits in this Bill; there are simply merits. In order to control the dairy industry, a system of licensing is essential. The Bill, therefore, requires every dairy farm, creamery, and factory to be licensed. A dairy farm is any land

or premises where cows are milked or kept to produce milk for sale or for preparing dairy produce for sale; a factory is a place where any dairy produce is prepared, packed, canned, or manufactured for sale; and a creamery is defined as any place, not being a dairy farm or factory, where milk is collected and separated or where cream is collected. The fee for a licence for a dairy farm is sixpence per cow; for a factory, two pounds; and for a creamery, five shillings. No fee will be charged for licensing a dairy farm where less than six cows are kept. The Bill provides for the transfer of licences and also for refusing or cancelling the licence of a dairy farm, factory, or creamery if the Minister is satisfied that the farm, factory, or creamery is not suitable or in a fit sanitary condition for use as a dairy farm or factory. A licence for a margarine factory may be refused if the factory is within 100 yards of a butter factory. Against cancellation or refusal of a licence there is a right of appeal to an Appeal Board, the constitution of which I will explain later. The Bill confers powers on inspectors and the Minister to prevent unhealthy animals from being used for the production of milk for sale or manufacture into dairy produce. The powers are as follows:—

Firstly, an inspector can prohibit for any period not exceeding two weeks the sale of milk from any cow if he is of opinion that the milk would be unwholesome, and he may brand such a cow with a temporary brand. Secondly, any temporary prohibition of the sale of milk from a cow must be reported to the Minister, who may reduce or extend the period of prohibition or make the prohibition permanent.

The Hon. T. Pascoe—Will the Minister be in a position to do that properly?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—The honorable member, from his experience of administration of Government departments, ought to know that such work is carried out by officers whose recommendations are simply approved by the Minister. A prohibition must not be made permanent except upon the advice of a qualified veterinary surgeon. Thirdly, a cow the use of which is permanently prohibited may be branded with a permanent brand. Fourthly, inspectors may use such methods as may be prescribed by regulations to diagnose whether cows are suffering from any disease requiring them to be branded; but methods of diagnosis involving injection, aspiration, harpooning, or similar processes may only be used

under directions of a qualified veterinary surgeon (clauses 9 and 10). Clause 11 empowers the inspectors to enter and inspect dairy factories, creameries, and vehicles, in order to ascertain whether dairy produce is being produced under hygienic conditions. Clause 12 enables an inspector to order that a dairy factory, creamery, or vehicle used for conveying dairy produce shall be cleaned or disinfected. Clause 14 empowers inspectors to ensure that pure water only is used on dairy farms, factories, and creameries, while clause 15 provides for the supervision of scales, apparatus, and chemicals used for testing cream or milk. Clause 16 enables an inspector to seize dairy produce which is unfit for human consumption or which is being dealt with contrary to the Bill. Clause 17 relates to the construction and alteration of buildings intended for use as dairy farms, creameries, and factories. It empowers any inspector to require the owner of any dairy farm, creamery, or factory to cause means to be taken for the better construction and drainage of the buildings and premises used in connection with such farm, creamery, or factory. Clause 18 enables the Governor, on the application of the local governing authority concerned, to proclaim areas within any municipality or district council district within which cows are not to be kept, grazed, or milked.

The Hon. T. Pascoe—Does not that conflict with clause 3?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—No.

The Hon. T. Pascoe—Then the municipalities around the city will not have that power?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—The municipality or district council must take the initiative.

The Hon. T. Pascoe—The metropolitan municipal council could do the same under this Bill?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—This Bill does not apply to the metropolitan area. Clause 19 deals with appeals. Under the Bill there is a right of appeal against the cancellation or refusal of a licence for a factory, dairy farm, or creamery (clause 9); against the order of an inspector requiring any dairy farm, factory, creamery, or apparatus to be cleaned and disinfected (clause 13); against any order of an inspector requiring a water supply to be altered (clause 14); against any order of an inspector relating to chemicals, scales, measures, or apparatus used in testing cream and milk (clause 15); and against any

as to the construction and drainage of buildings (clause 17). For the purpose of hearing any of these appeals the Governor is empowered to appoint an Appeal Board. Such board may be appointed either to hear one appeal or any group of appeals. Every board will consist of five members. Two of the members will be persons actively engaged in the dairy industry and appointed by the appellant, either a member of the Central Board of Health being a legally qualified medical practitioner, and the remaining two persons shall be nominated by the Minister.

The Hon. T. Pascoe—Why do you seek to increase the number of members of the board from three to five?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—In order to meet the request of private factories, will give better representation. Clause 20 states certain offences. Its object is to ensure that only wholesome dairy produce shall be sold for human consumption. Clause 21 is designed to ensure that suppliers of milk shall obtain full value for all milk and cream supplied by them to factories. It provides that milk or cream so supplied is to be paid for either on the estimated butterfat content, or on the estimated amount of commercial butter obtainable from it. Which ever method be adopted, if the butter is actually manufactured from the milk or cream than that estimated, the supplier is to be credited with the excess. Clause 22 forbids the manufacture of dairy produce from trestle cream. Clause 23 requires that all cream supplied to a factory shall be graded, and a record of all cream showing the grade of proof shall be kept. The clause also requires that butter from each grade of cream shall be separately branded so as to show its quality. Clause 24 forbids the manufacture of butter in the same premises as those in which margarine is made, or within one hundred yards from such premises. Clause 25 requires factory owners to keep the prescribed book and records, and produce them for inspection when required by an inspector. The Bill provides that after the expiration of six months from the time when the Bill becomes law persons employed to grade or test milk or cream must hold the qualifications required by the regulations, and pass the prescribed examination. These requirements, however, will not apply to a person who has been employed in the work of testing and grading milk and cream for at least one year before the

commencement of the Bill. Among the miscellaneous provisions contained in clauses 27 to 32, clause 30 is the most important. It confers comprehensive regulation-making powers upon the Governor. Under it regulations may be made which will enable the Government effectively to supervise the dairy industry and ensure the purity of dairy produce, and in general to carry out the objects of the Act. When a similar Bill to this was introduced last session it was described in big headlines in some sections of the press as drastic and far-reaching. That description and the opposition it received in this Chamber were simply the result of misunderstanding. Soon after the Bill was defeated in this Chamber I took the opportunity of supplying copies of it to owners of private butter factories, co-operative factories and to the Dairymen's Association, and I have had conferences with all those bodies. I am lead to understand that there is no opposition from any of them except, perhaps, to some extent from a few persons in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. W. H. Harvey—Are you quite sure of that?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—Yes. Why the dairymen in the metropolitan area should object to a Bill which does not affect them I cannot understand. I refer to the Metropolitan Dairymen's Association, which was organised purposely to defeat this Bill. Their opposition was due to a misunderstanding. They have been left out of this Bill, and it will require amendment to bring them in. I do not know that it is necessary or advisable for me to explain the opposition shown last year, because I hope there will not be any opposition to this Bill. If there is it can be explained away unless there is prejudice against the Bill. Last session one member, I think Mr. Duncan, said that this State was so little interested in the dairy industry that legislation was not necessary. This State has made far greater progress and is far more interested in the dairy industry than Western Australia.

The Hon. W. G. Duncan—But they have an Act similar to this Bill, and we have not.

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—They thought it necessary in order to build up the industry in Western Australia to have legislation. I have copies of that Act which is almost exactly similar to this Bill.

The Hon. W. G. Duncan—But you say we have made more progress than they have.

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—Because we have been longer established. It is only of recent years that they have taken up dairying in Western Australia, and the Bill has been most helpful to them. All the other States have similar legislation. One of the objects of the recent conference of Ministers in Western Australia was to try to make legislation uniform throughout the States, and that has been the result of the conference in regard to dairy legislation. One of the objections of private butter factories to the Bill was that we were adopting the payment for commercial butter system, which meant that the factory would have to pay for every pound of butter manufactured. It is only fair, when a product is sent to any market, to pay for the whole of it, instead of having a large percentage of it taken away.

The Hon. J. Jelley—Is that not a reflection on the merchants?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—It is a reflection on the system adopted. The merchants were charging less than they ought for the butter manufactured. Under this Bill they can adopt one of two methods—pay on the commercial butter basis, or pay on the butter fat basis.

The Hon. T. Pascoe—Does it not mean that they will have to pay on the commercial basis?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—No. Seeing that this Bill was brought in at the request of the big majority of the dairymen, and has been approved by co-operative factories and by the owners of all private butter factories, I ask members before they oppose it to read it thoroughly and get an understanding of it. We get a revenue like £2,500,000 to £3,000,000 each year from the dairying industry, and an industry of that sort is worthy of legislation. I hope there will be very little opposition to the Bill on this occasion, because all the objectionable clauses have been removed.

The Hon. T. PASCOE secured the adjournment of the debate until August 21.