**BREAD ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1949**

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**Legislative Assembly, 7 September 19949, pages 570-1**

Second reading

**Mr. FLETCHER (Mount Gambier)—**I make no apologies for introducing this measure as it is the culmination of an outcry over a number of years from housewives and citizens in general of this State. The selling of bread unwrapped, non-delivery and zoning are legacies of the war years. They are restrictions that were complained of bitterly by most masters of industry on their introduction, but today the lifting or relaxing of them is as strenuously opposed by a number of these same people.

The insertion of new section 11a in the Bread Act of 1936 will overcome the position today of people having their bread handed to them unwrapped, to be carried away in all classes of weather and conditions. It is by no means in keeping with hygiene as set out in that valuable bulletin Good Health, published by the South Australian Central Board of Health.

Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) points out that the provision does not apply to bread delivered to residences by the usual method, provided it is delivered from a clean basket covered with a clean canvas, or other clean washable material. My experience has been that bread carters, as a rule, are very clean and careful, and take care to see that the food is properly handled

Paragraphs (b) and (c) also provide that bread sold to traders for re-sale need not be wrapped by the baker. This also applies to cut bread sold for consumption on the premises used for sandwiches, etc.

In some South Australian towns bakers have always wrapped bread, and this action is appreciated by residents. I have a list of bakers in the South-East who have wrapped their bread since the inception of zoning. Some bakers have claimed that they have been unable to procure paper, but I have been reliably informed that ample supplies are now available.

I feel that continuance of the publication Good Health and the advice given therein is a wasted effort if the section supplying the most essential food commodity, namely, bread, is to be allowed to continue the unhygienic methods prevailing in the city and most large country towns.

For a number of years there has been an agitation from my district in reference to the wrapping of bread and as a result I have received the following communication from the secretary of the local board of health at Mount Gambier:—

For some years the Mount Gambier Local Board of Health has been endeavouring to get legislation enacted in this State to enforce the wrapping of bread, but so far without result. Our board has recently requested the Central Board of Health to take some action in the matter—but for various reasons that board is not prepared to—while in the same breath they publish an interesting article in Good Health notes on the wrapping of bread. For your information I am forwarding a copy of the last letter received from the Central Board of Health, and also a copy of the pam­phlet Good Health of April, 1949. My board now thinks that the only way in which any success may be reached in this matter is by direct approach to Parliament, and therefore asks if you will be good enough to introduce this matter in the House and ask for a State Act of Parliament to be made similar to that in force in New South Wales.

Mr. Whittle—They can make a by-law themselves.

Mr. FLETCHER—They cannot. The following letter, dated May 25, 1949, was received by the Mount Gambier corporation from the Central Board of Health, Adelaide:—

Your letter of the 12th instant regarding the wrapping of bread was considered by my board at its meeting held yesterday. This subject has been considered on several occasions during the last few years. My board realizes that to avoid the handling of bread, the ideal would be to wrap the bread by mechanical means when freshly baked. This difficulty is that bread cannot, be wrapped satisfactorily until it is cold. Any value of wrapping of bread by a shopkeeper is offset by the fact that the bread would have been previously handled. Recurring shortages of new, clean, white or brown paper present difficulties in enforcement even if it were considered necessary to make wrapping compulsory. Both the advisory committee under the Food and Drugs Act and my board are of opinion that though it is desirable in some ways that bread should be wrapped, the various difficulties do not make it practicable as a compulsory measure. On review of the aspects concerned, my board has decided to take no action in the direction requested in your letter.

I have seen shocking conditions under which bread is delivered and stored. Every hon. member must be perturbed at the inroads of disease and epidemics. Can anyone say how the present epidemic of poliomyelitis in Australia and elsewhere started? There is nothing to prove its spread is not due to neglect in the delivery of unwrapped bread. In a bulletin issued by the Central Board of Health of South Australia in July, under the heading “Bad Food isn’t labeled ‘Poison’ ” Dr. Charles Hill states:—

Incidentally, it wouldn’t be a bad idea for all bread to be wrapped and for all meat in butchers’ shops to be behind glass.

That should be evidence enough to convince members of the need for bread to be wrapped. The Bill will not place undue hardship on bakers. They are not being asked to wrap their bread mechanically or that bread for delivery to private shops should be wrapped. Some towns in the country throughout the war were able to secure paper in which to wrap bread, whereas others claimed that it could not be done. I have been in contact with bakers in a number of towns in the South-East. In Naracoorte bread is wrapped. Bakers deliver bread in the country round Naracoorte, but not in the township. Bread has always been wrapped at Millicent but not at Beachport since restrictions were imposed. I understand that bakers at Bordertown and Keith and in the Tatiara district continue to wrap bread. The system asked for is long overdue.

Mr. Dunks—Can’t local Boards of Health pass by-laws to compel bakers to wrap bread?

Mr. FLETCHER—No.

Mr. Dunks—Can’t councils do so?

Mr. FLETCHER—They have not the power. If they had this approach would not have been made. I move the second reading.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS secured the adjournment of the debate