**FRUIT FLY (COMPENSATION) BILL (SEATON) 1974**

**House of Assembly, 8 August 1974, Page 381**

Second Reading

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to provide for compensation for loss arising from measured to eradicate fruit fly. Read a first time.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN moved:

That Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable the Bill to pass through all stages without delay.

Motion carried.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I move:

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

I thank the House for its co-operation in agreeing to the suspension of Standing Orders. The Bill provides in the usual manner for the payment of compensation to any person who suffered loss by reason of the actions of eradication officers in relation to those areas of the State affected by the various outbreaks of fruit fly during the early months of this year. The districts involved were Kent Town, North Adelaide, Parkside, Rosslyn Park, St. Peters, Hindmarsh, Hillcrest, Highbury, and Vale Park. All in all, 11 proclamations were made, and it is expected that the total cost of compensation could be about $50 000.

I shall now deal with the clauses of the Bill in detail. Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 directs that this new Act be read in conjunction with the Fruit Fly Act. Clause 3 sets out the basis for entitlement to compensation. Clause 4 provides that any claim for compensation must be lodged with the Fruit Fly Compensation Committee no later than August 31, 1974.

Mr. NANKIVELL (Mallee): The opposition supports this Bill, and I think its concern regarding this measure and the importance placed on it is evident by the fact that members are here to support the motion for suspension of Standing Orders to enable the Bill to proceed. I should like to make one or two comments relevant to this piece of legislation, even though its passage is considered to be urgent. Since the first outbreak in 1947, $6 687 000 had been spent in controlling fruit fly to the end of June, 1972. In 1972, $489 000 was spent on control, and $19 800 on compensation. The Bill intends to allocate an additional $50 000 for compensation to those persons who claim compensation from the Fruit Fly Compensation Committee before August 31 next. Those people who have claims have until the end of the month to lodge their claims with the committee.

This year we have seen a considerable spread of fruit fly into the eastern suburbs of Adelaide, as outlined in the second reading explanation, the districts involved being Kent Town, North Adelaide, Parkside, Rosslyn Park, St. Peters, Hindmarsh, Hillcrest, Highbury, and Vale Park. The most important of these, of course, is the Highbury outbreak. I believe the reason for the wide spread of infestation this year is the change in techniques being adopted by the department. The department has been exercising control over a limited area within a radius of about 2 kilometres from previous outbreaks. It has been covering the area during the season with a cover spray and a lure spray, but to cut down costs it was decided to rely more heavily this year on the lure spray. Regrettably, the trapping of flies outside the areas covered by the lure spray proved that there had been some fault in the lure spray used, and so the infestation has extended over an area much wider than may have been expected.

Because of the need for corrective measures, the process involved this year was to strip only ripening fruit, and I hope this is taken into account in paying compensation. People are not being compensated for the total loss of all fruit on all trees. My real concern, and that of people on this side of the House, is that, for the first time, the fruit fly has escaped into the commercial fruit-growing areas of the State. The outbreak at Highbury occurred in a commercial orchard, but it was possible to make special provision this year for the marketing of fruit from that area.

In supporting this Bill, I draw the attention of the House and the Government to the need to lay down a policy this year on whether it is intended to pay compensation for fruit fly infestation in commercial areas. If that was intended, I should like to know what form the compensation would take. My colleague the member for Chaffey shares my concern that the fruit fly is moving out of Adelaide suburbs into the commercial areas, where it could do tremendous damage and have tremendous effects on the activities of the many people engaged in fruitgrowing in this State. There is a need to lay down a policy regarding commercial areas, as opposed to what has applied regarding compensation paid for co-operation by people who have had fruit stripped from trees in the metropolitan area.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): I support the Bill and echo the comments made by the member for Mallee. I know the Highbury district and the orchard where the outbreak occurred last season, and I cannot stress too strongly the importance of taking the most stringent measures that can be taken to curtail the spread of fruit fly. The outbreak at Highbury was virtually right on the doorstep of the Adelaide Hills fruitgrowing area, including the Paracombe-Houghton area where I live, and I know the havoc that would be wrought among the growers to whom the member for Mallee has referred if the fruit fly spread even 1 km or so east of Highbury orchard concerned.

The property at Highbury on which the outbreak occurred has for many years been an important commercial producer of fruit, mainly pears. The spread of fruit fly to these commercial areas has much significance for the fruit industry in the State. We may be deluding ourselves by thinking that the measures taken are eradication measures. A long time ago, when I was a student, I took a vacation job working on the fruit fly eradication campaign. That was longer ago than I wish to tell the House, but it was one of the most lucrative vacation jobs that I was lucky enough to get. That shows how long the fruit fly eradication campaign has been in operation.

It sees to me that what happened in the last growing season emphasized the importance of trying to eradicate or at least keep the pest under control. If the commercial fruitgrowing areas became affected, the loss of export markets not only to the growers but also to the State would amount to millions of dollars. I do not begrudge $50 000 being provided to control what otherwise could become a major tragedy in the fruitgrowing industry in this State.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3“Compensation.”

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister has referred to 11 proclamations, and it seems that the sixth and seventh were both made on March 14, 1974. I ask the Minister whether that is correct, because it seems anomalous that the date is the same in each case.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works): I understand that the proclamations were issued on the basis of districts, and the districts would have been defined in those proclamations. The proclamations could have been issued on the same day.

Clause passed.

Clause 4“Time limit for claims.”

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I ask the Minister how an assessment is made and whether the strippers take some account of fruit removed at the time. I should like to know how claims by householders are verified. What evidence is available to show the accuracy of the claim? Apparently, from what the member for Mallee has said, some fruit was allowed to be used.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I appreciate the honourable member’s concern but I do not know offhand what evidence is available to the department to substantiate a claim made by a person under the Act. I know that a record is kept and I think that a carbon copy of the relevant document is issued to the person whose fruit is taken. I suppose that that copy would have to be submitted with the claim. The accuracy of that depends on the human factor and I do not know whether spot checks are made to find out whether the documents are issued correctly. Although I hope that, in future, we do not have outbreaks and need to compensate people under the Act, I will ask the Minister about the method of making spot checks.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works) moved:

*That this Bill be now read a third time.*

Mr. NANKIVELL (Mallee): I repeat the warning I have issued before, namely, that, as many of the fruit flies were found late in the season this year, it cannot be established with certainty that the present outbreak has been contained. As the late outbreaks of fruit fly were discovered on the fringe of or the gateway to the Hills area (in commercial fruitgrowing area), the Government will have to consider seriously its future policy with regard to compensation on commercial crops. With those few remarks, I support the third reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.