**LIVESTOCK (WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT) ACT 1947**

**Legislative Council, 26 November 1947, page 1560**

Second reading

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL (Midland— Attorney-General)—The object of this Bill is to authorise the Government to buy and breed livestock for the purpose of the war service land settlement scheme. At the end of 1945 the Land Development Executive advised the Government that it was desirable to acquire substantial numbers of sheep and cattle for the purpose of properly developing the pastures on land intended for settlement and for building up supplies of livestock from which settlers’ holdings could be stocked. When the scheme for the purchase of livestock was first suggested it was anticipated that all types of livestock, particularly dairy cattle, might be in exceedingly short supply and in strong demand and it was felt that the position was likely to continue and grow in intensity until holdings were ready for occupation. It was also considered that the price levels on the market would be likely to reach a point beyond the limited purchasing capacity of settlers. Events have confirmed this opinion expressed by the department. A point of significance with respect to heifer calves is that all are tested for tuberculosis and any found carrying this disease discarded and all cattle held by the department are inoculated for contagious abortion. This means that settlers will have the opportunity of acquiring disease-free stock, a guarantee which they could not expect when purchasing in the open market.

Acting on this advice the Government approved of the expenditure during 1945-1946 of the sum of £10,000 on the purchase of cattle and sheep. It was then thought that as the State was agent for the Commonwealth in the war service land settlement scheme, this sum would be recouped to the State by the Commonwealth as being expenditure incurred by the State on behalf of the Commonwealth. An experienced livestock officer was appointed and throughout 1946 and this year about 1,600 young dairy heifers were purchased and placed on Crown lands intended for soldier settlement. It is expected that in the next two years about the same number of heifer calves will be purchased. The £10,000 originally approved has now been spent. Owing to the high prices ruling for dairy cattle it is estimated that the value of the Government's herds, taken at present prices, greatly exceeds the amount expended. No sheep have been purchased as the excessively high price of sheep would have made it unprofitable to do so. TheCommonwealth has refused to meet the cost of the scheme. The Federal Director of War Service Land Settlement took the view—and he is no doubt right—that under the agreement the Commonwealth had no power to buy stock for re-sale to settlers. The agreement provided that loans would be made to settlers, by an authority agreed upon by the State and the Commonwealth, to enable them to acquire stock, but it did not provide that either the Commonwealth or the State Government would buy the stock and re-sell to settlers. As the Commonwealth has refused to accept the debit for the stock there is no alternative but to seek Parliamentary authority for the State Government to continue the scheme. A Parliamentary vote of the necessary money is also required.

Accordingly, the Bill has been brought down. It enables the Minister of Lands to buy and breed livestock, to sell livestock to soldier settlers and to sell culls and rejects to anyone. It also enables the Minister to dispose of any by-products of stock, such as skins, hides, wool, milk and cream. Power is conferred to maintaining the stock and provide stalls, stockyards, and other premises required for that purpose. There is an over-riding limitation on the powers granted by the Bill, namely, that these powers are to be exercised only for the purpose of building up herds and flocks from which livestock may be sold to settlers and for improving livestock using the pastures on land intended to be allotted to settlers. The Government does not seek general or unrestricted power of trading.

Clause 4 provides that in order to defray the expenses incurred for the purposes mentioned in the Bill the sum of £20,000 may be spent from general revenue during the year 1947-1948. Any further expenditure must be paid out of money to be voted by Parliament in future.

As the Minister responsible for the inauguration of this scheme I say emphatically that the whole plan was essential. On an area such as Eight-Mile Creek there will be soldier settlers requiring large numbers of dairy cattle and unless we had looked ahead we would have found that when the settlers required them either they would not have been available or the settlers would have had to be content with anything that was in the market, with no security that they were freefrom disease.

Hon. E. A. Oates—Do you confine the purchases to South Australia?

The Hon. E. J. RUDALL—I think so. t the time I was in control they were buying only in South Australia. If we had not looked ahead settlers would have been much handicapped. The Bill puts the matter on proper footing and I am satisfied it will pay handsome dividends. I move the second reading.

The Hon. E. A. OATES (Central No. 1) —It is with great pleasure that I support this measure. I congratulate those who had the foresight to look ahead and work out what was required in connection with the settlement of returned men on the land. I understand that the Attorney-General was Minister of Lands when the matter was first considered and he must have been responsible to some extent in deciding as to the number and class of stock to be provided. As a member of the Land Settlement Committee I have come in contact with some of the officers of the Lands Department and other officials connected with these projects. I refer in particular to the principal of Roseworthy College, Dr. Callaghan, who is doing everything humanly possible to make our soldier settlement schemes successful. He carefully watches and analyses every move so that those men to whom we made promises, when they enlisted shall have every opportunity of making a reasonably good start in life. Another valuable officer is Mr. Rowland Hill. I have had the pleasure of travelling with Mr. Hill and on one occasion he dealt with his visit to New Zealand. I gathered from his remarks that he had considerable knowledge of cattle and dairy cattle in particular. I first learnt from him that there was a move by the Lands Department to stock settlers' holdings. I was surprised to hear the Minister say that the department had been successful in obtaining 1,600 young dairy heifers. I take it that they would be a good class of cattle. It may be thought that £10,000 is a large sum but the amount would be two or three times as much if the department had to purchase this stock today.

I had an opportunity of seeing what was being done in the South-East in regard to pasture development for settlement of returned soldiers and I hope it will not be long before many men are settled on properties in this part of our State. Many men are continually inquiring when they will be able to obtain land. I know the difficulties which the Lands Development Executive and the Land Board are facing, but I feel that they are big enough to overcome all those difficulties. It has been said that very few men have been settled, but I can visualise the day when South Australia will outstrip some of the other States in the settlement of ex-servicemen on the land. In the Minister's speech the question was raised of what action the Commonwealth Government would take in regard to purchasing this stock. It is pleasing to know that the Commonwealth Government will be responsible for making a grant so that settlers can stocktheir land.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—Will it be a grant to the settler?

The Hon. E. A. OATES—It will be up to a point. Some writing down is to be expected but I hope the Government will carry out the promise made to assist settlers in stocking land.Some ex-servicemen are willing to take up land now with no home on it and assist in pioneering it . We know the policy of the Commonwealth Government, agreed to, I believe, by the State Government, that a home should be on a block before allotment. Many pioneers went on to blocks without homes and lived for years in huts and today have mansions and perhaps are living in retirement. Possibly land will be purchased where opportunities can be given to local residents to work the land from their own homes or from where they are working, perhaps in casual employment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. A. J. Melrose)—I draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that we are discussing a Livestock Bill, not a general measure dealing with the settlement of returned servicemen.

The Hon. E. A. OATES—I was speaking about ''premises or structures,'' which are referred to in paragraph *(d)* of clause 3, and I do not feel that I was transgressing. I support the second reading.

The Hon. J. L. S. BICE (Southern)—I subscribe entirely to the principle involved in this Bill. The Minister explained the details that gave rise to it. He pointed out that by the purchase of 1,600 young heifers at a cost of about £10,000 the Government has embarked upon a scheme that will provide ex-servicemen with stock that can be relied upon to be free from disease. But for this scheme settlers would have been compelled to go on the ordinary stock market and we know that the dairy farmer does not sell his good cows but those that are no use to him. The same principles were embodied in the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1917-1940, and I am surprised that authority was necessary for the present scheme seeing that that Act is still in existence. However, there must be sound reason for it. The Government wants to keep this account separate so that a new debit order can be issued for the amount involved in the purchase of the stock. The Government has purchased the heifers at a reasonable price—an average of about £6 a head—and a further £10,000 is asked for.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—The settlers will have to pay for this stock?

The Hon. J. L. S. BICE—Yes. They will be allocated to the settlers. The number acquired will not provide dairy herds for more than 60 settlers. We hope a great number of returned men will be settled on the land being improved. The Government has the feed for the stock, the grazing costs will not be great and I presume they will be added to the purchase price of the stock. The Government has pure-bred bulls. It has bull yards erected at the back of Eight-Mile Creek and the man who gets heifers bred from them will have good stock to start with. Though there may be some disappointment in regard to heifers, on the whole the scheme is sound and right and I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The Hon. N. BROOKMAN (Southern)—I congratulate those responsible for initiating and carrying out this scheme. It is a very good business arrangement. It will enable ex-servicemen to get healthy cattle, all inoculated against contagious abortion and tested for T.B., and although they may not be high-class producers they will form potential herds which the settlers will be able to improve and ultimately turn to profitable use. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment. Committee's report adopted.