**MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1959**

**28 October 1959, page 1295-7**

Second reading

**The Hon. D. N. BEOOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture)—**I move—

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

Its purpose is to extend the operation of the Marketing of Eggs Act for a further three years from September 30, 1960. Although the operation of the principal Act was extended in 1957 until September, 1960, it is considered desirable, in the interests of the egg industry and stability in general planning, to introduce this amending Bill now rather than wait until the Act is nearly expired before doing so. The principal Act was first passed in 1941 and has been extended from time to time. The marketing scheme created under the Act has become an important part of the egg industry and orderly marketing is important in this State, where periods of surplus production alternate with periods of shortage.

Under the marketing scheme created by the principal Act the South Australian Egg Board markets all eggs produced by commercial egg producers. The board consists of six members, three representing producers, two representing wholesalers and retailers respectively, and the sixth member was the Chief Poultry Advisor in the Department of Agriculture. However, Mr. Anderson, who retired from that position within the last 12 months, is still chairman of the board.

The board is represented on the Australian Egg Board which regulates the overseas export of eggs. As the export market is on a consignment basis there is frequently a gap of some months between the time when the eggs are received by the board and the realizations for the eggs are known. The Australian Egg Board makes an advance payment to the State Egg Board at the time of packing in order to bridge this gap, final adjustments being made at the end of the season. For the reasons which I have stated earlier the Government believes that the industry should continue to receive the support of this legislation in the marketing of its eggs and considers it desirable that this extension Bill should be enacted into law during this Session of Parliament.

Recently the export trade has assumed less significance, whereas the interstate trade has greatly increased. The Egg Board has been through a difficult period and it has done particularly well in getting through it. It finished the 1957-58 year with a surplus and this year with a comparatively small deficit. On occasions members have asked questions about the interstate trade in eggs: they have referred to the appearance on our market of small eggs from Victoria at a time when interstate buyers have been purchasing our eggs outside the operations of the board. By selling to interstate buyers, as they have been doing, producers avoid the board’s levies. That is a problem we must accept and -deal with as best we can. Last year, when small Victorian eggs started coming here in large quantities, the board was faced with a serious situation, but because of its prudent administration the board found markets in the eastern States, particularly in Sydney, for some of our eggs and these markets are certainly more attractive than the export market that we had to fill previously.

Mr. Hutchens—Are undersized or second grade eggs acceptable in the eastern State markets ?

The Hon. D. N. BEOOKMAN—No. I think the Egg Board is placing good eggs on the interstate markets. The policy of the Egg Board and of the Department of Agriculture has been to get producers to go in for large eggs. We have always set a high quality standard and the fact that producers have adopted that policy has stood the board in good stead in its operations in the last few months. It has sometimes been suggested that it would be possible for an interstate truck to come to South Australia with a load of eggs, unload them and load up with South Australian eggs and go back to the eastern States.

Mr. Hutchens—Bringing in comparatively bad eggs.

The Hon. D. N. BEOOKMAN—Whether or not that happens I do not know, but some eggs do come here from the eastern States and South Australian eggs go there. It is a difficult matter, but in many respects it could be worse. Mr. Anderson, who was Chief Poultry Adviser until he retired, and who is a poultry expert, has concentrated on this marketing problem in the last few years and is keen on a Commonwealth scheme. Such a scheme has always been “scotched” by New South Wales, which would come into the scheme only on condition that that State got a better price for its eggs than other States did for their eggs on the Sydney market. The only incentive for a Commonwealth scheme is to have eggs sold at about the same price in every State. Such a scheme would cut out private trafficking in eggs. Members of the Australian Egg Board, and particularly the chairman, are interested in a Commonwealth scheme, and they are working on one for submission later to State Governments. I should like to see such a scheme in operation, but the present position is by no means bad. If it could be improved by a Commonwealth scheme, let us first have the scheme to consider. The egg producers have done fairly well despite the difficulty the board has had in marketing eggs. Unfortunately there has been a fall in egg production. In the previous autumn and summer weather affected the production and that is why the board had some difficulty, but for the most part it has done a good job. Previously Parliament agreed to this legislation and I have no doubt that it will agree to extending the term of the board for another three years.

Mr. LAWN secured the adjournment of the debate.