**METROPOLITAN AND EXPORT ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1945**

**Legislative Assembly, 9 October 1945, pages 434-5**

Second reading

**The Hon. G. P. JENKINS (Newcastle—Minister of Agriculture)-—**This Bill is the outcome of the report of a Parliamentary Joint Committee appointed last year to make recommendations in respect of the future working of the metropolitan and export abattoirs and the Port Lincoln freezing works. It will be remembered that last year, with the big rush of stock to the .markets, in some measure owing to drought conditions, there were considerable gluts. That, however, was not peculiar to last year as, for a good many seasons, gluts have occurred at certain periods. There have already been a number of inquiries in respect of the abattoirs. Two Country Freezing Works Committees submitted reports in respect of the matter, but the dissatisfaction expressed in this House and elsewhere and the feeling that possibly something could be done to avert the gluts which occurred from time to time, led to the appointment to a Joint Select Committee and the results of its recommendations are embodied in the present legislation.

Mr. O’Halloran—Are all the committee’s recommendations embodied in this Bill?

The Hon. G. F. JENKINS—Yes. object of the Bill is to carry out the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee which inquired into the Abattoirs Board, and to make a number of other amendments to the Act which have been asked for by the board in order to deal with administrative problems. The recommendations of the committee are carried out by clauses 4 and 5. Under clause 4 the present board is continued in office without change until June 30 next. Thereafter a new board will be appointed in accordance with the committee’s recommendations. The main points in the committee’s recommendations are that consumers’ representatives on the board (who are elected by the councils in the Abattoirs area) should be reduced from three to one) ; and instead of the three industry representatives elected by delegates of various bodies interested in the meat industry, there will be five industry representatives, each representative of a different side of the industry. Of these five representatives three will be selected by the Government without nomination, as being suitable representatives respectively of export lamb breeders export pig breeders, and stock salesmen and exporters, one industry representative will be selected by the Governor from three persons nominated by Master Butchers Limited, and one from three persons nominated by the Australian Meat Industry Employees Union.

The term of office of the chairman will be six years, as at present. The other members of the board will retire two in each year, but the normal term of office for each of these members will be three years, computed as from July 1 in the year in which the member was appointed. Clause 5 repeals sections 13, 17 and 18 of the principal Act which are rendered superfluous by the amendments made in clause 4. Clauses 6 and 7 contain amendments asked for by the board. They alter the board’s accounting period from the year ending November 30 to the normal financial year ending on June 30. Clause 8 repeals section 71 of the principal Act. This section prohibited the sale of the flesh of calves under 21 days old or weighing less than 40 lb. The board has informed the Government that this prohibition is unnecessary because many of these calves are quite fit-for human consumption. If they are not they are condemned by the board’s inspectors immediately after slaughter Clause 9 is consequential on clause 8.

Clause 10 empowers the board to permit farmers within the Abattoirs area to slaughter stock on their farms for consumption thereon. The board has for some time allowed this practice to go on in the Salisbury area, although it is technically a breach of the Act. It is obviously desirable that the law on this matter should be in harmony with the accepted practice, and for this reason clause 10 contains full provisions for granting permits to the farmers in question. Clause 11 provides that the board may establish cold stores for fruit and other perishable commodities and may treat meat by canning, dehydration or other process. The board has, at the request of the Commonwealth and under an indemnity granted by the Commonwealth, been doing these things and it is desirable to take the present opportunity of securing legal power to carry on such operations.

Clauses 12 and 13 empower the Government, with the consent of the Abattoirs Board and any council concerned, to exclude territory from the Abattoirs area. The need for this power arose in connection with an area of the Mitcham council. Both the council and the board are agreed that it was desirable to exclude a part of the council’s area from the Abattoir’s area, but the law did not permit such an exclusion. The power now proposed will be useful for effecting adjustments of the boundaries of the Abattoirs area. There is already power to increase the area, but none to diminish it. Clause 14 is consequential on clause 11 and empowers the board to make regulations as to cold storage, canning and dehydration. I am sure that members who read the report of the Joint Select Committee and various other reports which have been made from time to time in respect of the work of our Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs must have felt gratified to know that they compare more than favourably with any abattoirs in Australia.

Mr. Dunks—And the local governing bodies put them on a very good foundation.

The Hon. G. F. JENKINS—Some years ago the Abattoirs were taken from that control because so much dissatisfaction was felt with regard to it at the time and Parliament considered that it should be put on a more stable basis. In the words of a hymn with which I am sure my friend is quite conversant, instead at that time of going the whole hog Parliament said, “One step enough for me.” It took one step and now is taking another step to do the job thoroughly and put the undertaking on a better basis. The works have been highly commended by many authorities who have visited them. I read a report recently by Mr. Copley, of Western Australia, who has an abattoir of his own. He was appointed by the Commonwealth Government to report on the efficiency of the abattoirs here. His report was most favourable to the administration and to the work performed by the abattoirs, and he said they compared more than favourably with any other public abattoirs in Australia, which I think was very high commendation. Members of the Joint Select Committee had an opportunity of perusing a report made by a South African commission which visited Australia some years ago for the purpose of inspecting abattoirs with the object of recommending what should be done in South Africa. That commission’s comments in regard to the Adelaide abattoirs were most favourable, and they said they were going to recommend— and I believe they did actually recommend—that in the establishment of abattoirs in South Africa they should be modelled on our works here. Mr. Copley commented particularly on the great cleanliness of our abattoirs and their freedom from flies, which he said was in marked contrast to what he had seen in some other abattoirs he had inspected in various parts of Australia. Whatever we do we must bear these things in mind, and realize that we have abattoirs which we need not be ashamed of and which have done good work for the consuming public in the metropolitan area particularly and, under certain difficulties at times, also done excellent work for the producers.

Mr. Dunks—Then why do you want to alter the board?

The Hon. G. P. JENKINS—The Joint Select Committee made certain recommendations to the Government and I am bringing in a Bill to give effect to them. It is competent for Parliament to deal with that report as it thinks proper, but the view I have held for some time has been that there is room for improvement in regard to the board. I held that view at the time previous amendments were made in regard to the board. If I had had my way at that time and had felt that there was a possibility of carrying them, I would have moved amendments to give effect to my ideas. However, the House held certain opinions and we went as far as we could at that time, but the method of election of members of the board under the presentmAct is admittedly cumbersome and one has great difficulty in understanding how the representatives really are elected. The Bill simplifies procedure and gives us a better opportunity of giving effect to the desires of the public in regard to it. I move the second reading.

The Hon. J. McINNES secured the adjournment of the debate.