**STOCK DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1956**

**Legislative Assembly, 23 October 1956, page 1133**

Second Reading

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Stock and Poultry Diseases Act, 1934-1954. Read a first time.

**The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Agriculture)—**I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It makes a number of administrative amendments to the Stock and Poultry Diseases Act. Subsection (2) of section 5 of the Act defines as infected stock, stock which have, within the preceding three months, formed part of a lot of diseased stock or have been in contact with diseased stock. The Chief Inspector ofStock has pointed out that this period of three months is not appropriate for some diseases, the incubation period for which is much longer than three months. The Chief Inspector has recommended that the period of contact should be fixed according to the disease and the incubation period for that disease. Accordingly clause 3 provides that, in lieu of the period of three months mentioned in the subsection, the period shall be that prescribed by regulation for the disease. Paragraph (a) of clause 4 extends the regulation making power of the Governor accordingly.

Paragraph (*b*) of clause 4 provides that the Governor may make regulations prohibiting artificial insemination of stock except under the prescribed conditions. The Chief Inspector has pointed out that artificial insemination can be a considerable factor in the spread of diseases such as trichomoniasis and vibriosis and has recommended that provision should be made for some control of its practice. Section 8a of the principal Act was enacted in 1954 and it empowers the Governor to make regulations dealing with measures to be taken to combat foot and mouth disease and other proclaimed diseases. Among other things, the regulations may provide for the quarantine of infected stock. Clause 5 extends this provision to enable the regulations to provide for the removal of infected stock to quarantine grounds in addition to providing for the quarantine of stock upon the land where they are kept.

Sections 11 and 12 of the principal Act empower inspectors to enter land. It is proposed by clauses 6 and 7 to extend this power of entry to premises and fittings. “Fittings” is defined by section 5 to include such as stalls, stables, horse boxes and so on. Obviously, the power of entering should extend to these structures. Section 13 of the Act provides that if an inspector believes stock to be diseased, he may, for the purpose of deciding whether or not the stock are diseased, kill one head of stock, or if the stock forms part of a lot exceeding 100 in number, two head of stock. The section goes on to provide that if there are more than 100 head of stock in any lot, the inspector may, in addition, kill two head of stock in any 100 or part of a hundred of the excess. It is proposed by clause 8 to substitute 200 for the figure 100, so that the number of head of cattle which may be killed for examination will be one for every 100 instead of two as now provided.

Section 14 provides that if pleuro-pneumonia is discovered in a lot of cattle, the Chief Inspector may cause the cattle to be inoculated and the inoculated cattle are to be marked in manner prescribed. Clause 14 provides that this marking is to be as determined by an inspector. The usual manner of marking is to bang the tail, that is, cut off the hair at the end of the tail, although this has not been prescribed. However, if the tail has been banged for some other purpose, as frequently occurs, it is necessary to use some other identifying method. Thus, it is considered that it is better to leave the method of marking flexible and to the decision of the inspector rather than prescribing marks by regulation.

Section 15 provides that an inspector may employ any person to assist him and may pay him reasonable remuneration. It is considered that this provision is too wide and clause 10 provides that the Minister may authorize the Chief Inspector to employ such persons and to pay reasonable remuneration. Section 16 empowers an inspector to seize and destroy diseased travelling or straying stock. Clause 11 extends this power to include infected stock.

Section 19 provides that if an owner of stock discovers or suspects them to be diseased, he must, within 24 hours, send to the nearest inspector and to the Chief Inspector at Adelaide a notice in the form in the third schedule. It is provided by clause 12 that, in lieu of filling in the form set out in the schedule, the owner of the stock is to notify the inspector and the Chief Inspector by the quickest practicable means which, of course, could be by direct oral communication, telephone, telegram or letter. The third schedule containing the form which is now required is repealed. Early notification of disease is necessary, but it is considered unnecessary to insist on the information being given on a particular form.

Clause 12 also provides that if a veterinary surgeon or similar person is called in to attend to stock and he is satisfied or suspects that the stock are diseased, he must notify the nearest inspector and the Chief Inspector. However, it is provided that this provision is only to apply to such diseases as the Minister from time to time notifies in the Gazette, and it is not intended that it should apply to the whole range of diseases to which the Act applies.

Section 23 provides that if diseased stock are introduced into the State, the Minister may direct that they be destroyed. Clause 13 provides that, in lieu of this, the stock may be returned to the owner on conditions determined by the Minister including a condition for payment of any expenses incurred with respect to the stock and the condition that the owner will remove the stock from the State. Section 24 provides that where land which has been quarantined is declared to be clean, a certificate to that effect of an inspector is to be published in the Gazette. Clause 14 provides that, in lieu of publishing the certificate in the Gazette, a copy is to be given to the proprietor of the land.

Section 28 prohibits the introduction into South Australia of diseased stock. Clause 15 extends this prohibition to infected stock and stock suspected to be diseased or infected. Section 31 provides that the Chief Inspector may exempt an owner from the duty to dip sheep in any ease where he is satisfied that, by reason of drought conditions, shortage of water, the weakness of the sheep or for any other like cause, it would be impracticable or burdensome to dip the sheep. Clause 31 deletes the word “like’’ and inserts “other”, thereby extending the discretion of the Chief Inspector.

Section 32 provides that where sheep are dipped in compliance with Part V of the Act, the owner is to send a return to the Chief Inspector. It is considered that it is unnecessary to require these returns in all cases and clause 17 provides that, instead of the obligation to furnish returns being general, it will be necessary to send a dipping return only when the Chief Inspector requires the owner of the sheep to furnish the return. Part VI of the Act provides for the inspection of poultry. The Chief Inspector has recommended that this Part be repealed as “poultry” is included in the definition of “stock” in section 5 and all poultry inspectors are also stock inspectors. Clause 18 therefore repeals Part VI. As the consequential amendment clause 2 deletes the words “and Poultry” from the short title of the Act.

Sections 42 and 45 give rights to travel stock over land within hundreds which is leased from the Crown or is Crown lands. Similar rights to travel stock over pastoral land is contained in section 99 of the Pastoral Act. Clause 19 provides that the rights given by sections 42 and 45 are not to apply in any case where the stock are suffering from or infected with any disease to which the Minister by notice in the Gazette declares the section is to apply and clause 20 provides that failure to comply with clause 19 will be an offence under section 42.

At first sight the Bill may appear involved, but it is not. It applies no new principle, but it does much to tidy up the Act. Further, it will assist in dealing with deadly diseases such as pleuro-pneumonia and in the work to begin on foot-rot in this State. Many of the old provisions were frequently not completely complied with; for instance, a return was required from all persons after they had dipped their sheep. I think that this law was honoured more in the breach than in the observance, and in this respect the Bill makes a realistic approach to the matter.

Mr. O’Halloran—Why is it necessary to notify both the inspector and the chief inspector in all cases?

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I cannot just say at the moment.

Mr. O’Halloran—One would think one notification would be sufficient.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—After all, the chief inspector is the authority, and I presume that is why he has to be notified. It is provided, and it will be enforced, that where an inspector has reason to order the dipping of sheep, whether they have been dipped or not, after the sheep have been dipped a return must be furnished so he will know whether his instructions have been carried out. It may be thought from my explanation of the Bill that it attempts to restrict the artificial insemination of stock, but such is not the intention. It is certainly not my intention, for I hope that before long we shall be able to extend this practice so that a man with insufficient cows to warrant the purchase of a good quality bull will be able to take advantage of this modern service. This would result in the standard of our cattle, particularly dairy cattle, being raised even beyond its present good standard.

Mr. O’HALLORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.