**CHAFF AND HAY BILL 1922**

**Legislative Council, 22 August 1922, pages 331-2**

Second reading

The Minister of Agriculture, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to make fur­ther and better provision for preventing the adulteration of chaff, and for regulating the sale of chaff and hay; read a first time.

Second reading.

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE (Hon. T. Pascoe)—With one exception this Bill is practically the same measure as was passed by the Council last session. Members will remem­ber that we passed a Chaff and Hay Bill, and it then went to the other House, where certain amendments were made, with which we did not agree, with the result that it was dropped. Since then, however, members of the Chaff Merchants’ Association waited on me, with a request that the Bill should be again introduced, because they believed in it as it was passed by the Council. At that deputation Mr. Knox, as representing the Chaff Merchants’ Association, said:—

They desired to emphasise the fact that, more protection was needed than would be given by the Bill as passed by the Assembly. The Bill as passed by the Legislative Council represented the views of the chief inspector under the Act, and generally the opinions of the members of the Chaff Merchants’ Association, and while they could not claim that it would be unanimously supported by the chaff merchants, they were satisfied that the great bulk of the trade were behind them in the matter. Purchasers of chaff were. in real need of protection against dishonest practices. The majority of the men engaged felt it almost impossible to meet the competition of the dishonest trader. The honest trader required protection equally as much as the purchaser of chaff. They were asking that in the sale of chaff the weight should be “bags included” and not “net weight”.

That was the rock on which we split with the Assembly last session. The Council provided for the sale of chaff by ggross weight, which is the practice as regards practically all other commodities.

The Hon. J. Lewis—Have you done away with the uniform weight?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—Yes, we have done away with that. I remember working with the honorable member some time ago, and we were opposed to the sale of standard bags of chaff, because we felt that with shrinkages and one thing and another it would be impossible to carry that out. The law as it stands to-day is that there are two standard bags of chaff. One which is generally used weighs 561bs., but there is a possibility of having a 701b. bag. As regards standard bags of chaff, much depends on how much moisture happens to be present when the chaff is cut, and though a merchant may well fill the bag, if there is much moisture it may, when sold, be 31bs. or 41bs. under weight. In that connection the Assembly put an amendment in the previous measure to the effect that the weight should not include the weight of the bag. Gross weight is the customary weight for trading, but the Assembly’s chief amendment provided that chaff should be sold by net weight, and not gross weight. This House did not agree with that. A later clause provided that a merchant selling chaff should give a cartnote showing the weight. That is not much to ask, and is the practice in all other lines of business, and the chaff merchants themselves do not object to it. The other House, however, contended that it would put too grievous a burden on the chaff merchants, and inserted this proviso:—

Provided that this, subsection shall not apply to the sale of any quantity of chaff or hay less than 5cwts., unless the purchaser, on or before such delivery as aforesaid, requires such weight note to be given.

I do not know what was in the mind of the Assembly when that amendment was made, but it meant that protection would be given to a person who bought over a quarter of a ton, but that the man who bought a bag would have no protection, unless he asked for it. This Council did not agree with that proviso. The only difference in this Bill, as compared with the measure passed last year, is found in clause 10, which deals with the question of dealers having to give notice of their intention to cut straw chaff. That clause provides that three days notice shall be given, and is the only portion which this House did not agree to last year.

The Hon, J. Lewis—What do you mean by straw chaff?

The MINISTER of AGRICULTURE—That is defined in the Bill. It states “Straw chaff” means any chaff other than hay chaff. The definition of “hay chaff” will also be found in clause 2, and it embraces a variety of plants. That definition is much wider than has hitherto been the case in regard to what is known as hay chaff. The crux of the Bill is the alteration from selling by the standard bag to selling by weight. If this measure is passed every bag will have to be sold by weight and a cartnote given, but if a person buys more than one bag he will get a cartnote for the lot, not for each single bag. That is the custom in all other trades now. I move the second reading.

The Hon. W. HANNAFORD secured the adjournment of the debate until August 29.