**METROPOLITAN AND EXPORT ABAT­TOIRS ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1958**

**House of Assembly, 3 September 1958, pages 692-3**

Second reading

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

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

It represents a major forward step in the provision of slaughtering facilities for meat for export. The Government is keen to assist in this as it will help primary producers and the State generally. In recent years there have been numerous demands for the encouragement of export killing by people other than the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs. The encouragement sought was permission to sell reject meat in the metropolitan area. A person licensed under Commonwealth regulations is legally entitled to slaughter for export but his licence is of little value unless he has a ready market for reject meat. Under the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Act the sale of this reject meat in the metropolitan area is not permitted. In order to provide a solution to this difficulty the Government now brings forward this Bill. It accordingly gives the right to sell reject meat in the metropolitan abattoirs area but subject to a number of conditions.

The stock from which the meat is derived must be slaughtered at an abattoirs registered pursuant to a right, licence or authority granted by the Commonwealth. These export abattoirs are, in fact, registered under the Commerce (Meat Export) Regulations which have been made under the authority of the Customs Act. The abattoirs may be situated within or outside the metropolitan abattoirs area. The stock so slaughtered must be the property of the licensee. The meat in question must have been rejected by a Commonwealth inspector as unsuitable for export but must have been inspected by an inspector of the board and branded as suitable for human consumption. The licensee, must pay the prescribed inspection fee. If the abattoirs is situated within the metropolitan abattoirs area the inspection will be made there. In other cases, the inspection will be made at a place appointed by the board.

It is provided that the total weight of the reject meat, which may be sold by any licensee within any period of 12 months ending June 30, is not to exceed 10 per cent of the total weight of the meat which is slaughtered for export by the licensee, and is exported from the State during that 12 months as fresh meat in a chilled or frozen condition. That is, his local sales must not exceed 10 per cent of his exports. This means that the quota of rejects which he can sell in the metropolitan area must not exceed 10 per cent by weight of the meat lie slaughters and exports. The Government has made careful inquiries before selecting the figure of 10 per cent. This is a generous figure. It should be pointed out that the term “reject” has been used very loosely in the past and reject percentages frequently give a false impression. In recent years the meat export trade has developed techniques and found markets which make possible the export of a great deal of meat as pieces. This means that a carcass that is loosely termed a *“*reject”may be so on account of a dog bite or bruise. The techniques referred to simply involve removing the affected area and exporting the healthy portion of the carcass in pieces. Statistically a “reject” may to a large degree become export meat.

The percentage is fixed with relation to a period of 12 months and will thus permit fluctuations above and below 10 per cent during the course of the 12 months. All categories of meat are included in the percentage and the percentage will apply to the total weight sold or exported, as the case may be. In order to deal with a case of irresponsibility, where it becomes obvious at some stage during the 12 months that a licensee is exceeding his permitted quota, it is provided that if the Minister is satisfied that such is the case, he may give notice to the licensee requiring him to sell, during such period as is fixed by the notice, in accordance with another and lesser percentage fixed by the Minister. Thus, the Minister could for a fixed period reduce the licensee*’s* quota to say 7 per cent. Before giving notice of this kind, the Minister is to consider any representations made by the licensee in the matter. Failure to comply with notice given by the licensee will create an offence. If a licensee honours the conditions set out in the Bill, this Ministerial power will, of course, not be used but it is considered that such a power is necessary to prevent breaches of the conditions.

The Bill provides that every licensee is to keep records of the meat sold within the metropolitan abattoirs area and the meat exported and that these records are to be available for inspection by the Board. It is obvious that provision of this kind is necessary to enable the provisions of the Bill to be enforced.

It is also provided that, in any proceedings under section 70 (b) of the Act, that is, for selling meat in the metropolitan abattoirs area which is not slaughtered at the metropolitan abattoirs, it will be a defence for the defendant to show that the meat was sold in accordance with the Bill. The facts to establish that the defendant is entitled to the exemption from section 70 (b) created by the Bill, will only be within the knowledge of the licensee or the person seeking to claim the exemption given by the Bill, and it is therefore proper to provide that the proof of these facts should be a matter for the defence.

Members will see that the main purpose of this Bill is to enable those who export to do their own slaughtering. In the past that has been virtually impossible because they have had only a small outlet for reject meat. This difficulty will be solved as a result of the Bill which, I am confident, will assist the slaughtering for our growing export trade. We are not solely a lamb exporting State for we have expanding markets for boned meat— mutton, particularly—to the United States and Japan. A quantity of boned beef is also exported. There is a limited market in Canada as well. These markets are expanding rather than contracting and our meat export trade is in a healthy state.

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