CATTLE COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1979

Legislative Assembly, 7 November 1979. pages 813-4

Second reading

The Hon. W. E. CHAPMAN (Minister of Agriculture) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Cattle Compensation Act, 1939-1976. Read a first time.

The Hon. W. E. CHAPMAN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The national campaign to eradicate bovine tuberculosis and bovine brucellosis has pointed up the need to make amendments to the Cattle Compensation Act in a number of different areas. These may be summarised as follows:

A, At present compensation is paid for cattle condemned for tuberculosis at routine slaughter, in addition to positive reactor cattle ordered for slaughter. It is understood that the provision was originally made in order to protect owners of infected properties from undue discounting of their cattle by meat operators. Now that freedom from tuberculosis has been achieved throughout most of the State, payment of compensation for such cattle is tending to deter owners of infected herds from fully cooperating with eradication procedures. It is therefore no longer desirable that compensation be paid for non-tested cattle condemned at slaughter.

B Unavoidable delay in preparation and processing of claims for compensation, particularly of brucellosis reactors, has caused financial hardship to many cattle owners. It is desirable for payment of agreed market value to be made without delay from the fund. Subsequently the residual meat value will be paid into the fund. Where residual value exceeds agreed market value the excess will be paid to the owner.

C To expedite tuberculosis eradication in remote areas the use of trained lay personnel is necessary. Section 15a(l) precludes payment of compensation unless cattle have been tested by a registered veterinary surgeon. It is therefore desired that section 15a(l) be amended to allow for payment of compensa­tion for cattle tested by lay personnel.

D Under the Act expenses incurred in the slaughter and disposal of animals may be reimbursed to the owner. There are circumstances where disposal of cattle by burial on contract is required. Where several owners are involved, division of costs is difficult. Authority is needed for the fund to pay the contractor direct.

Moreover, during the past year cattle prices have risen substantially. In view of the buoyant state of the fund it is appropriate to increase the maximum compensation that may be paid in respect of any one animal or carcases. To allow for flexibility in the future, it is proposed that this maximum should be fixed by regulation. No regulation will be made without proper consultation with the industry.

I respect the request by industry in this regard, and I place on record our obligation, as a Government, to consult with industry on this and like matters. Changing the regulation with respect to the compensation amounts payable on a fluctuating basis should be a matter discussed with the industry, and I refer in this instance particularly to the United Farmers and Stockowners Association in South Australia, which is widely representative of the rural industry, and more specifically representative of those primary producers who produce livestock, including cattle.