**STATUTES REPEAL (AGRICULTURE) BILL 1983**

**Legislative Assembly, 23 March 1983, pages 606-9**

Second reading

The Hon. W.E. CHAPMAN (Alexandra) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to repeal certain Acts relating to agriculture. Read a first time.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill seeks to repeal some 31 Acts relating to agriculture which have been found to be obsolete and/or duplicated by other Acts still on the Statute Book that we believe should be retained. Whilst the Liberal Party was in Government from 1979 to 1982 it set out deliberately to remove from the Statutes such obsolete material. Indeed, the former Government set up a deregulation unit in the Premier's Department to research the Statutes applicable to all portfolios, and the unit did an incredible job, having regard to the time and facilities available to it. The unit identified an enormous amount of material that had been stored, stacked and retained for whatever reason over the years. Consistent with this objective, as time and opportunity permitted, the former Government introduced Bills into this House for the purpose of repealing Acts that fell into this category.

The Hon. D.C. Brown: I believe that the new Government has a somewhat different philosophy: I think it is a Government of regulation, not repeal.

The Hon. W.E. CHAPMAN: The member for Davenport reminds me that the present Government has a somewhat different philosophy, that it has a different attitude of governing, and I accept the fact that in many respects the new Government is different. The Government has a different style, which at times might amount to dictation in regard to application of policies, and so on. However, that is not the purpose of this exercise. I am simply demonstrating the Liberal Party's desire (even though we are not in Government at present) to proceed with this programme of removing obsolete material from the Statute Book.

In respect to the Bill before the House, members will recall that last year, when in Government, I introduced an identical measure which proceeded to the second reading stage in this House, but the Government was unable to conclude that action before being displaced from office. The present measure is a repeat of that action. Upon introducing the Bill as Minister of Agriculture in 1982, I sought and secured the support of the then Opposition in this House, and a report that came back to this House from another place indicated that that support had also been secured from the Upper House. I would hope that, although there has been a change in Government, the Labor Party has not in the interim changed its attitude towards this most desirable measure.

I look forward to support for the Bill from members opposite. It is not unlike a Bill that I introduced during the Liberal Party's term of office in Government which was debated and passed. At that time the Government removed from the Statutes a number of obsolete Acts pertaining to the agriculture portfolio, including those provisions covering the Fruit Fly Compensation Committee, Oriental Fruit Moth Committee, Renmark San Jose Scale Committee, Waikerie San Jose Scale Committee, Berri/Bamera Red Scale Committee, Markaranka—Pooginook Red Scale Committee, Renmark/Lyrup Red Scale Committee, Swan Reach Red Scale Committee, Waikerie District Red Scale Committee, and so on. On that occasion we enjoyed a swift passage of the Bill which was introduced for exactly the same purpose as the one before the House at the moment.

The Liberal Government sought to deregulate controls on small business in South Australia, and the deregulation unit did an enormous amount of work and was very successful in the action that it instigated in regard to several administrative directions to take away encumbrances concerning the activities of small business. I refer to the consolidation licensing and registration and various other details surrounding small business in South Australia which were welcome improvements. The unit was begun by the Tonkin Government and performed very well during its period in office. I hope that present and future Governments will continue to monitor the superfluous encumbrances hovering over businesses and the community at large and to limit them where possible.

Returning to the second reading explanation, and before seeking leave to have the detail inserted in Hansard, let me say that, on coming into Government and gaining the responsibilities of agriculture, I inherited more Acts as a Minister of this State than did any other Minister of that Government, including the Premier. Added to that massive list of Acts, associated in the main with agriculture and in part with the portfolio of forestry, was another quite significant list of statutory authorities. Added to the responsibilities of those Acts and statutory authorities coming under that portfolio was an incredible number of committees that had been set up over a long period to service the respective departments, in particular, the Department of Agriculture.

Some were of an inter-departmental nature, some were of a standing committee nature, and some of an ad hoc nature. It appeared that the pattern and attitude over the years had been to accumulate, build up and add to, but never to take away the superfluous or obsolete activities of those respective groups. Even in that latter area we deliberately set out while in office to reduce the number of committees servicing the Department of Agriculture, and in fact we reduced the number by 90. That theme or style to cut out the red tape and the superfluous and obsolete areas was not only introduced when we came into office but positively adopted throughout that period.

I am not here to boast about our successes and achievements during that period, but I raise the subject in introducing this Bill for the simple reason of seeking the co­operation from the Party that is now in Government to continue with that style and get off the Statute shelves all material that is of no value now and would seem to be of no value in future. We are too cluttered, as a community and as a Parliament, with such measures. In this instance, I believe that this Bill covers the greatest number of Acts ever contained in a Bill in Australian political history for repeal at the one time. I am proud to be associated with an action of that kind, and I look forward to the support of the Party in Government in this House and their colleagues in another place. I seek your leave, Mr Speaker, and that of the House to have inserted in Hansard the balance of the second reading explanation without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Explanation of Bill

The purpose of this Bill is to repeal a number of Acts relating in general to agriculture which are now obsolete. The effect is to clear the Statute Book of redundant enact­ments, an object to which this Government is committed by its policy of deregulation. In most cases the Acts were passed to provide financial assistance to farmers in times of hardship by reason of disastrous seasonal climatic conditions. Another large category is that of fruit fly compensation which concerned the urban community and in each case related to fruit fly outbreaks in a specific year.

Each of the Acts was designed to meet a contemporary situation which was of a limited duration. It is desirable that obsolete enactments be repealed in order that the Statute Book remains as uncomplicated as possible. The provisions of the Bill are as follows. Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 provides for the repeal of the Acts set out in the schedule. The schedule sets out the Acts which are to be repealed. I shall summarise briefly the effect of each of the enactments which the Bill proposes to repeal, and the reasons for its redundancy. The Drought Relief Acts of 1914, 1919, 1923, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1940, 1945 and 1946 were all basically enacted to provide drought relief to farmers for that particular year. Some of the Acts related to previous seasons as well, when these were drought years. These Acts had a finite time of operation.

Acts which related to the same problem were the Drought Relief Act Amendment Act, 1920, which was introduced to overcome a legal difficulty in recovering moneys loaned for drought relief and the Drought Relief (Extension) Act, 1929, introduced to assist farmers because of poor seasonal con­ditions. In a similar vein the Drought and Frost Relief Act, 1944, was introduced for the purpose of providing assistance to primary producers who suffered loss through drought or frost in 1944.

The Frost Relief Act, 1927, was introduced to assist fruitgrowers whose crops were destroyed by the frosts that occurred in September 1927. The Voluntary Wheat Pool Agreement Ratification Acts, 1924, and 1925, were introduced for the establishment of a voluntary wheat pool in South Australia for the marketing of wheat of the 1924-25 season in the first instance and in the second instance for its continuation for another three years. The Hailstorm Relief (Validation) Act, 1925, was introduced to ratify action taken by the Government to get relief for those unable to assist themselves or get relief from other sources for the damage done by a hailstorm in 1924.

The Farmers Relief Act, 1931, the Farmers Relief Act Extension Act, 1931, and the Farmers Relief Act, 1932, were introduced to provide finance for farmers due to the effects of drought in previous years. In the first instance this was for the season 1931-32 due to the effect of previous drought years and the poor return in 1931-32. The passing of the Farmers Relief Act Extension Act, 1931, had the effect of extending the assistance into the 1932-33 season and the Farmers Relief Act, 1932, extended the period of the operation of the legislation to cover the 1933-34 season.

The Chaff and Hay (Acquisition) Act, 1944, provided the necessary powers for the Government to acquire supplies of chaff and hay in order to meet the requirements of primary producers in drought-affected areas of the State. The powers of the Act were to remain in force until 30 September 1945.

The Wheat Stabilisation Scheme Ballot Act, 1948, the Wheat Price Stabilisation Scheme Ballot Act, 1953, and the Wheat Price Stabilisation Scheme Ballot Act Amendment Act, 1954, were introduced in the first instance in 1948 to authorise the holding of a ballot of wheatgrowers on the Commonwealth Government proposals for the stabilisation of the price of wheat. The 1953 Act was introduced to ascertain the views of wheatgrowers on a further stabilisation scheme. Due to the delay in getting all Governments to agree to the stabilisation proposals, it was necessary to amend the 1953 Act to include growers who delivered wheat in the 1953-54 season. Hence the 1954 Act was introduced to amend the 1953 Act, to allow those who delivered wheat to the board in 1953-54 or who planted 50 acres or more of wheat for the 1954-55 season to also be included in the poll.

The Waite Agricultural Research Institute Grant Act, 1948, enabled the South Australian Treasury to make an additional grant for the upkeep of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute for the financial year 1948-49. The grant ($7 000) that was requested by the institute (through the University of Adelaide) was to help the institute balance its accounts. The University of Adelaide in its budget for 1948-49 had actually requested $8 000 extra for the operation of the institute, but this had not been accepted. It was hoped that in future years the budgeted figures for the operation of the institute would be sufficient and additional grants not necessary.

The Fruit Cases Act, 1949, was introduced to alleviate a shortage of packing cases for fruit and vegetables during 1949. The Act was intended to prevent the removal of these boxes from the trade either through non-return or in some cases destruction for kindling. The Fruit Fly (Compensation) Acts of 1967, 1968, 1971, 1971 (No. 2), 1972, 1972 (No. 2); and 1974 were introduced to provide compensation for fruit losses arising from the campaigns for eradication of fruit fly by South Australian Department of Agriculture officers. These Acts related to particular outbreaks in particular years.

Since 1974 the method of fighting fruit fly outbreaks has changed. Whereas in earlier outbreaks all fruit for a 1½ km radius was stripped from trees, from 1974 only infested trees were stripped and any fallen fruit within a radius of 200 metres was taken. Compensation under this method of control is now very small and if required is paid from Ministerial sources. Hence no Acts are required. Therefore, it is appropriate that each of the Acts contained in the schedule to the Bill be repealed.

The Hon. T.H. HEMMINGS secured the adjournment of the debate.