**DRIED FRUITS ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1972**

**Legislative Assembly, 28 March 1972, page 4349**

Second reading

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time. This Bill, which arises from a submission by the Dried Fruits Board, enacts certain amendments to the principal Act, the Dried Fruits Act, 1934, as amended. The matters dealt with in this Bill are briefly as follows: (a) provision for increased contributions from registered packing houses to meet the sharply increased costs of administration of the Act; (b) the removal of the requirement as to registration of premises where fruit is not actually packed; (c) provision for a $25 annual fee for registration as a dealer; and (d) provision for increased fees for regis­tration of packing houses. In addition opportunity has been taken to make certain metric conversions to the principal Act. As members will be aware the continued existence of the Dried Fruits Board in this State is vital to the wellbeing of the industry here. In co-operation with the authorities in other States it declares quotas for the release of dried fruits on the home market, and this is essential if the Australia-wide scheme of marketing arrangements is to operate successfully.

However, in common with other organizations the board has found its financial position deteriorating; administration costs have risen and to some extent production from which revenues accrue to the board is falling. In the year ended February 28, 1972, the board had a deficit of $4,234 and, although the prospects for this year are somewhat brighter, a substantial deficit is again expected, and as a result the board has had to draw heavily on its reserves. It is clear that this situation cannot be allowed to continue and the increases proposed are the minimum that will allow the board to function effectively.

Clauses 1 and 2 of the Bill are formal. Clause 3 effects a metric conversion to section 10 of the principal Act; the conversion here is, for all practical purposes, an exact one. Clause 4 increases the amount of contributions required to be made in respect of registered packing houses from a maximum of $1.20 a ton to a maximum of $3 a tonne in the case of dried vine fruits and a maximum of $6 a tonne in the case of other dried fruits. Within these maxima, there is in proposed subsection (2a), provision for fixing different amounts for different varieties of dried fruits. I would also draw members’ attention to the fact that these new maximum contribution levels are calculated with reference to the metric tonne of 2,2041b. In this context it may be regarded as the same as a ton.

Clause 5 is a small but quite significant amendment to section 19 of the Act in that it will enable depots for the storage and distribution of dried fruits which previously were often registered as packing houses, even though they did not pack fruits, to be registered without fee.

Clause 6 amends section 23 of the principal Act and provides for a $25 annual fee for registration as a dealer. Previously no charge was made for such registrations. Clause 7 amends section 24 of the principal Act and generally increases the annual fees required in relation to the registration of packing houses. The increase is from $2 to $10 in the case of annual fees and from 50c to $5 for transfers of registration. Clause 8 provides for formal amendments requested by the Commissioner of Statute Revision.

Mr. WARDLE secured the adjournment of the debate.