**STOCK DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1903**

**House of Assembly, 8 October 1903. pages 559 - 60**

Second reading

**The TREASURER**, in moving the second reading, said that the Government were anxious to get the Bill through at once in order that the officers might be better able to cope with the outbreak of swine fever in the south-east. They had asked that an expert from Queensland should visit Adelaide and consult with the local experts, and in this legislation Queensland lines were being largely followed. Members would agree that the disease should be quickly stamped out, and where strong measures were necessary for this purpose it was only fair that the taxpayers should be called upon to pay some of the lose sustained by owners of pigs, who had spent large sums of money in building up their herds. Clause 2 of the Bill read:—“Whenever the Commissioner is satisfied that any infected stock should be destroyed in order to eradicate any disease, or prevent the spreading of any disease, be may order that such infected stock shall be forthwith destroyed by the owner under the direction of an inspector, and at such time and place as such inspector may determine.” In that direction they had not gone quite so far as the Queensland Act, in that they had not provided that any loss in sties or fittings should be shared by the taxpayers. Clause 3 read:—“When infected stock is destroyed pursuant to any order of the Commissioner the owner shall receive compensation from the Government of the state for such infected stock, which, when destroyed, is found to be free from any disease. Provided that when com­pensation is payable in respect of any swine destroyed the value put upon any one animal shall in no instance exceed the sum of £3.” That was an innovation, the Government having thought it wise to limit the amount to be paid for any one animal to £3. Clause 4 provided that the rate of compensation should not exceed’ one-half of the actual current value of healthy stock of the same description as the infected stock destroyed, and such compensation would be subject to deduc­tions provided for in the next section, which read:—“The owner shall realize upon any stock killed which after, being killed is found to be free from disease, and shall immediately thereafter furnish the inspector under whose direction the same was killed with a true statement of such realization; and the amount received therefore shall be deducted from the compensation payable to such owner.” The Attorney-General did not think that under the present Stock Diseases Act there was sufficient power to charge an owner with the whole lose in connection with the killing of animals of this class. Authority was given for the Governor to make regulations for a variety of purposes, including “the seizure and destruction of diseased1 stock,” which did not cover all the power that was needed to cope with the swine fever in the south-east. It was almost needless to say that the power now sought would be exercised with the greatest caution.

Mr. HOMBURG said that the marginal notes of the Bill stated that the sections 3, 4, and 5 were copied from clause 22 of the Queensland Diseases in Stock Act. The- Queensland clause in question read:—“In any case where stock or any articles, articles or things used in connection with stock have been destroyed under the pro­visions of this Act the owners shall receive- compensation from the fund, but the rate of compensation shall not exceed one-half of the actual current value of healthy stock, or articles., or things of the same description as the stock or articles so des­troyed.” What was the reason that in the Bill before them articles, which must, bear a considerable amount of infection, had been omitted in the matter of compensation to be paid? In the Queensland' Act swine fever was made a special subject. When the Government had obtained power to destroy animals suffering from disease it should be essential that they should also obtain power to destroy the stys. The Bill gave the right to kill the animals, but the surroundings in which the fever germs had developed were allowed to go without destruction. Under the Health Act the house in which a person suffering from typhoid fever had resided, the house had to be thoroughly cleansed, and unless the Commissioner took power to destroy the surroundings of the diseased animal as well he would not accomplish much good. (Treasurer—“I will make some provision.”) In reference to compensation the Bill stated that, provided the Commissioner was satisfied that infected stock should be destroyed in order to eradicate disease, the inspector had power to order the animals to be killed. Section 3 laid it down that if any infected stock were killed the owner should receive compensation for such infected stock, which, when destroyed, were found to be free from disease. That was a considerable modification of the Queensland Act, which was clear, and he could not understand it. (Treasurer—“If you kill 100 pigs because they are declared infected and 50 are found to be free from the fever compensation will be paid on those 50.”) Then they would destroy a whole herd to eradicate the disease, and if some of them were found to be free compensation would be paid on those free and no compensation on the diseased ones. There was a proviso, however, that if the amount of compensation should not exceed half the actual current value of healthy stock, and the value was not to exceed £3 in value. If 20 swine were destroyed and half were found to be healthy the owner could not get more than 30/ per head compensation, and he might get £1, so that he might obtain £15 for half of his herd. The next clause provided that the owner had to realize on the clean meat, and the amount obtained was to be deducted from the compensation. Suppose he sold the clean meats for £5 he would not receive anything for compensation, and therefore he would receive nothing for having his pigs killed. (Chief Secretary—“He would get nothing any way for his infected pigs.”) Except that they might recover. The Commissioner would not pay more than 30/ per head in respect of any pig, no matter what its value. That was an injustice to the man. (Treasurer—“Who would buy the meat from animals that had been contacts?”) It was bad enough for the man to lose his pigs without being refused compensation. In Queensland the compensation was not to exceed half the actual current value of the same class of pig, but there was no limit to the amount. (Treasurer—“£3 is a good price.”) If were a sucking pig it would be, but if were a pig such as he saw at the show weighing 1,200 tb. it would be a very bad price. It was provided in the Queensland regulations: —“Provided, that whenever the regulations permit that any carcase may be destroyed by boiling down, all the products of such destruction shall belong to the owner, and the value thereof shall be taken into consideration in estimating the compensation to be paid to him in respect of the stock, and all other articles or things destroyed.” In the Bill under consideration there was a hard-and-fast rule as to the value. If members who were conversant with the effect it would have on the stock were satisfied with the provisions, he raised no objection, bult it seemed to him that it would be a matter of great loss to some of the farmers. The Treasurer asked them to pass the measure at once, but he was not prepared to accede to that request. If the Bill had been urgent it could have been brought down a little earlier. They would, for instance, like to know what Mr. Duncan, who was a large stockowner, had to say on it. He asked that the House should have time to fully consider the measure.

On the motion of Mr. DARLING- the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, October 13.