**INSECTICIDES BILL 1910**

**House of Assembly, 4 November 1910, pages 908-9**

Second reading

**The TREASURER,** in moving the second reading, said the subject matter of the Bill was dealt with last year in the Chaff and Fruit Bill; but it was considered to have no relation to chaff, and would be more convenient for the public if placed in a separate Bill. There had been a tendency to mix up different questions in one mea­sure. (Mr. Coombe—"All administered by the same office.”). Sometimes, but it was difficult for an outsider to follow. So many different interests were affected by this Bill that it would be advantageous to have it separate. It appeared, when the Chaff Bill was in course of preparation, that there was no practical connection between in­secticides and chaff and hay, and it was de­cided to deal with those various matters in two separate Bills. Some of the pro­visions of the two Bills were the same, or only such variations occurred as the dif­ference in subject matter necessitated, and for other provisions the Fertilizers Act, 1900, had formed a precedent. The main object of the measure was to protect people who made their livings by growing or selling fruit, vegetables, and flowers, from being victimized by the sale to them of articles which were claimed to be effec­tive for destroying pests, but which were of little, if any, use. Incidentally it would benefit amateur gardeners as well as those who grew for purposes of trade, and consumers as well as producers. It would tend to encourage honesty in trade. A man would get what he paid for. He would not have foisted upon him a little sand coloured with some harmless material to do duty for insecticides. (Mr. Senior— “Paris green and sand.”) Yes; all sorts of tricks were resorted to to foist valueless articles on the public. The history of the American wooden nutmegs had been followed by other people. (Mr. Homburg— “This is on the same lines as the Fertilizers Act, is it not?”) It followed the same principle exactly. The importance of legislating in this direction was pointed out bv Mr. Summers, the inspector under the present Chaff and Fruit Act. He said: —“This is a matter of very serious importance, especially to the fruitgrowers. Spraying with arsenical compounds is absolutely necessary to prevent injury by codlin moth, and the success of the whole season’s work depends on the strength of the constituents and the poison used. There are four or five brands of arsenical poison now on the market, and these are very largely used by the growers. I think I am within the mark when I say that the expenditure on proprietary brands alone this year will exceed £5,000, and in my opinion the growers are justified in asking for the same protection as purchasers of fertilizers. ... As the supposed constituents of these preparations are well known, no hardship would be caused to any honest manufacturer by compelling him to guarantee the constituents thereof.” Insecticides and fungicides, the matters dealt with, were defined in clause 2. A fungicide was a substance used for destroying or preventing the attacks of fungi or other parasitic plants or bacteria. An insecticide was a substance used for destroying insects and other pests which affected plants or fruits or animals, or for preventing them from attacking such things, or for destroying rabbits, vermin, rodents, and other noxious animals. In either case, however, before any substance came within the operation of the measure it must be proclaimed an insecticide or fungicide by the Governor. It was sought to ensure the supply of genuine articles for the purposes already mentioned. Firstly, by prescribing standards which would state the constituents and their respective proportions and conditions. In cases where standards had been prescribed no sale would be allowed unless in accordance therewith. Secondly, by requiring sellers to state specified constituents and the percentages thereof upon the sale of insecticides and fungicides. Only such constituents as were proclaimed by the Governor needed to be specified. On sale an invoice or statement had to be given to the purchaser, stating the distinguishing mark which was to be made upon every package and the percentages of the proclaimed constituents; and on each package there had to be placed a corresponding mark and a statement of the percentages. Penalties were imposed for neglect to observe these provisions or for false statements. These clauses had been adapted from the Fertilizers Act, 1900. This was carried into effect in another direction in the Food and Drugs Act in Victoria and other places where the constituent parts had to be mentioned on the outside of the package, so that people who had formerly bought medicine which was nine-tenths water and the rest alcohol would be able to get decent medicine, which would cure them. He had some time ago met a man who told him he travelled from one end of the State to the other, and sold pure water as a remedy for colds and a cure for consumption. The man thought it as legitimate as his occupation, though he (the speaker) thought it a serious reflection upon him. (Mr. Homburg—“He must have known you, I think.”) There was a further provision that a buyer need not accept delivery unless the provisions as to invoice and marks on packages were complied with. The remaining clauses dealt with administration and the detection and punishment of offences. Inspectors might be appointed, and their powers of examination were defined by clause 12. Clause 13 prescribed the procedure to be adopted when samples were taken for analysis. A salutary prevention of adulte­ration and sale of worthless articles was provided for in clause 15—the power to publish the results of analysis with the names of the persons from whom the articles were obtained. He believed this was the most effective way of dealing with such people. There were precedents for this also in the Fertilizers Act and the Food and Drugs Act, 1908. A general regulation-making power was given to the Governor by clause 17. Clauses 18 and 19 contained certain provisions as to evidence, clause 18 providing “that an offence proved as to a sample shall be deemed to exist with regard to the bulk from which it is taken;” and clause 19 contained the usual provision with regard to the effect of a certificate by an official analyst. Analyst was defined in clause 2. The remaining clauses 20 to 23 were in the common forms as to legal proceedings, penalties, and appeals. The Bill was required by fruitgrowers particularly. It was serious when a man depended on having good insecticide and found he had been using rubbish, spending money on labour which was quite ineffective and the disease spread. It was hard upon such a man, and he should be protected.

On the motion of Mr. COOMBE the debate was adjourned until November 8.