**APIARIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1943**

**House of Assembly, 2 December 1943, pages 842-3**

Second reading

**The Hon. B. J. RUDALL (Angas—Com­missioner of Crown Lands**)—This Bill makes an amendment of the Apiaries Act for the purpose of providing that Kangaroo Island shall be a sanctuary for the breeding and keep­ing of pure Ligurian bees. The circumstances giving rise to this amendment are of interest. In 1885 an Act was passed at the instance of the Chamber of Manufactures to make Kangaroo Island a sanctuary for pure Ligurian bees and it was hoped that, as the result of the legislation, the Island would be reserved for the breeding of that type of bee which was then, as it is now, recognized to be one of the best strains for beekeeping purposes. A Mr. Fiebig stocked part of the island with bees imported from Italy and bred the strain on the Island from 1885 to 1891. Apparently, the project was not continued but the bees have, ever since that time, continued to breed and the Government is informed that very many colonies of them are to be found in every part of Kangaroo Island where the trees are large enough and where there are suitable hollows. These bees are an excellent and hardy type of Ligurian bee.

When the Bill of 1885 was mooted one of the foremost apiculturists of the United States of America (T. C. Boot) wrote:—“If you are successful in passing the Ligurian Bees Bill the world will yet come to you for these bees.” Boot expected that, as several types of bees then existed in Italy and no attempt was being made then to keep them pure, the pure Ligurian strain would eventually disappear. Within 40 years this forecast proved true. The Government is advised that it is doubtful whether the pure strain of Ligurian bees to be found in Kangaroo Island can be found elsewhere in the Commonwealth or in the world, and that the conditions on the Island provide an opportunity of breeding this pure strain which should not be overlooked. The purpose of the Bill is therefore, to amend section 12 of the Apiaries Act to provide that the Ligurian strain of bees on Kangaroo Island will be preserved. Section 12 of the Apiaries Act re-enacts the provisions of the Ligurian Bees Act, 1885, but its provisions need alteration if Kangaroo Island is to be a sanctuary for Ligurian bees. The present section and the Act of 1885 prohibited the importation into Kangaroo Island of any bees other than pure Ligurian or Italian bees. The inclusion of the word “Italian” was an error. It was evidently thought at the time that the Ligurian bee was the only Italian strain, but this is not so. As it is considered that Kangaroo Island is perhaps the only place where the pure Ligurian strain is to be found, and as the colonies of bees on the island are ample to provide for the intended purpose, it is proposed in clause 2 of the Bill that the importation of any bees of any kind into Kangaroo Island will be prohibited.

It is also provided that if any bees other than pure Ligurian bees are found on the island they may be destroyed. The Government is informed that whilst the bees found on the western side of the island are of the pure strain, some of the bees in the eastern part of the island are not true to type. It is, therefore, considered that there should be power to prevent the moving of bees from the eastern part of the island to the other part. Clause 5 accordingly provides that the Governor may by proclamation prohibit bees from being brought from any specified part of Kangaroo Island to any other part. Necessary powers of inspection, which are similar to those now contained in section 12, are given to inspectors and members of the police force. The Bill will thus enable the opportunity given by the existing conditions in Kangaroo Island to be availed of by a combination of circumstances there is a pure Ligurian strain of bees on the island which can probably not be equalled elsewhere. The breeding conditions, the area available, and the isolation of the island from the mainland are such that the breeding of this pure strain of bees can be carried out under extremely favourable conditions. It is hoped that, as a result of this Bill, queen bees of the best type will be bred on Kangaroo Island for supply to apiarists on the mainland. I move the second reading.

The Hon. E. S. RICHARDS (Wallaroo— Leader of the Opposition)—This is one of those bee Bills that we seem to get in the latter part of the session nearly every year, and I know of no one more appropriate to introduce a Bill of this character than the bee expert to whom we have just listened. I never heard such a conclusive and educative report upon bees. The Bill has some merit and no good purpose will be served by unduly delaying its passage. However, I am at a loss to understand how we are to preserve a line of demarcation between east and west on Kangaroo Island.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—I think bees have a very limited range.

The Hon. E. S. RICHARDS—Like the bee, the sting of the Bill is in its tail and the provision for penalties seems to be out of all proportion to the offence. I remember the debate we had on the principle of fixing maximum penalties and giving courts discretionary power. If any unfortunate admirer of the western queen is found guilty of having strayed to the eastern end of the island with one of the Minister’s favourite queens on his arm he will be liable to a penalty of £20. Whilst I would not encourage the offence of “pinching” the Minister’s queens I think it is rather stretching the imagination too far to suggest that the offender might be called upon to pay a fine of £20 for encouraging one of his queens to go astray. I think this measure will be more difficult to administer than the measure upon which we had so much discussion last night concerning the re-aggregation of land. From the point of view of honey pro auction it is wise to preserve the very best strain of bee, and I believe that the Bill is worthy of sympathetic consideration.

Mr. PETHERICK (Victoria)—As one engaged in a modest way in beekeeping I com­mend this Bill. When we realize the importance of the trade in queen bees we must realize how essential it is that an area so favourably situated as Kangaroo Island should be maintained for the protection of a strain of bees which will be for the benefit of all beekeepers in Australia. There will be difficulties in administration, but they are not insurmountable because bees have but a limited range and there could be, as it were, a buffer area mid-way between the eastern zone and the western zone on which no bees might be kept.

Mr. Macgillivray—-How would you keep the bees from swarming in that area?

Mr. PETHERICK—They do not travel a great distance and could be prevented from swarming to any considerable extent because the poorer type of bee could be driven further back so that it would not range the country populated by the better type. Beekeepers move their bees from one location to another two or three times in a season and they can be looked after fairly well. The scheme is worthy of a trial and I commend it to the approval of the House.

Bill read a second time and taken through remaining stages.