**STOCK MEDICINES ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1973**

**Legislative Assembly, 29 August 1973, page 593**

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.

It makes a number of disparate amendments to the Stock Medicines Act, 1939, as amended, and can probably be best explained by a consideration of its clauses in detail. Clauses 1 and 2 are formal. Clause 3 amends section 3 of the principal Act, which relates to definitions, and inserts a definition of “expiry day”, which is consequential on the establishment of a new, rather longer, registration period for stock medicines. It also inserts a definition of "registration period”, which again is consequential on that proposal, and finally this clause amends the definition of “sell” to make clear that “sell” includes, in the context of this Bill, advertising for sale.

Clause 4 amends section 4 of the principal Act, which sets out certain exemptions, and this amendment is to make clear that stock medicines prescribed and compounded at the direction of a veterinary surgeon will be exempted from the Act. In its original form, the scope of this provision was not entirely clear. Clause 5 amends section 7 of the principal Act, which provides for the registration of stock medicines. By this clause and clause 7 it is proposed that the registration period for stock medicines will be increased from one year to three years. This should result in greater convenience of administration of the Act and impose a somewhat reduced burden on those whose duty it is to have all medicines registered. Consequent on the establishment of this longer period, there is proposed an increase in the fee for registration. The fee will be $15 for three years, with a system of pro rata reduction for registrations that extend over a lesser period.

Clause 6 repeals section 8 of the principal Act, which preserved the confidentiality of information provided by the Stock Medicines Board relating to its consideration of the registration of stock medicines. Everyone would agree that in this area this confidentiality should be preserved, and there is no doubt in the Government’s mind that it will be so preserved. However, the existence of this provision has somewhat inhibited the proper exchange of information between the States, particularly where it is a possibility that a substance at first thought to be harmless but later found to be deleterious was being used in stock medicines. On balance, it is thought better that this provision should be removed, since it goes without saying that exchanges of information between official bodies are of vital importance if full effect is to be given to the purposes and objects of the principal Act. Any improper disclosure of information can, of course, be dealt with under the Public Service Act.

Clause 7 amends section 10 of the principal Act and is intended to relieve the Chief Inspector of the duty of publishing the register of stock medicines in the Gazette each year. This publication is quite expensive and, in fact, serves little purpose. New subsection (2) provides that the register shall be maintained properly and be available to the public. This clause also contains amendments consequent on the the proposal to establish a three-year registration period.

Clause 8 repeals section 14 of the principal Act, which over the years has been shown to have had no practical value and merely to have imposed a quite unnecessary burden on dealers in stock medicines. In its place a new section 14 is proposed. This new section sets out the grounds on which the registration of a stock medicine may be cancelled. It is suggested that the grounds are self-explanatory, but I would advert specifically to the ground related to in paragraph (d) of subsection (1) of proposed new section 14. This provision is directed specifically at the protection of our export markets and is intended to deal with the situation where the country to which our exports are directed places or threatens to place an embargo on animal products affected by certain chemicals that may be used in stock medicines. It is quite clear that action in this case must be swift and uniform throughout the Commonwealth.

Clause 9 amends section 15 of the principal Act and somewhat enlarges the categories of persons who shall be competent to undertake analysis of stock medicines. Clause 10 amends section 19 of the principal Act, which contains the general power to make regulations. The new heads of power, it is suggested, are self-explanatory and, in the nature of things, regulations made under these heads will be subject to the scrutiny of this House.

Dr. EASTICK secured the adjournment of the debate.