**BARLEY MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1952**

**Legislative Assembly, 9 October 1952, pages 873-4**

Second reading

**The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS (Minister of Agriculture)—**I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. Before introducing it I made some inquiries amongst those people who were most concerned with it—the barley growers of this State—to ascertain whether they desired it, and I do not think I heard of any opposition to it. The general opinion expressed was that barley growers were satisfied with the working of the Barley Board and were of the unanimous opinion that the legislation should be re-enacted because of the benefits this Act had conferred on the industry

The objects of this Bill are to extend the legislation under which the Australian Barley Board is constituted and to make some amendments to deal with problems which have arisen in the course of the board’s operations during the past five years. The Bill has been submitted to and approved by the Victorian Government, and a Bill in the same form has already been introduced in that State. Members no doubt are aware that the Australian Barley Board is constituted under statutes passed in identical terms by this Parliament and the Parliament of Victoria in the year 1947. Under these Acts the barley marketing scheme which had previously been operated by the Commonwealth as a war measure was continued under new administration for a further period of five years. This period will expire after the present season, and the question of extending the Act must therefore now be considered. Discussions have taken place between the Government of this State and the Government of Victoria as to the desirability of a renewal and both Governments have agreed to recommend to their Parliaments that the scheme should be continued for another five years, that, is until the end of the season 1957-1958. Information received by both Governments indicates that the barley marketing scheme is generally acceptable to the growers and that their feelings are in favour of a continuance of the scheme. Some persons have suggested a longer term than five years, but the Governments feel that in a matter such as this it is not wise to make arrangements too far ahead, and that it is better to err on the side of moderation. For this reason, therefore, a term of five years has been decided upon and this extension is given effect to by clause 7 of the Bill.

Clauses 3 and 4 deal with the remuneration and allowances payable to members of the board. At present these are fixed by the arrangement made between the Government of South Australia and the Government of Victoria under which the Australian Barley Board is set up. This arrangement can only be altered by an Act of Parliament. In view of the need for adjusting salaries and allowances to meet recent changes in the value of money it appears to the two Governments concerned that it would be better if the remuneration and allowances of the members of the board could be fixed by agreement between the Ministers of Agriculture rather than by the more formal method of altering the arrangement between the Governments. It is accordingly proposed by clauses 3 and 4 to take away the power to fix members remunerations and allowances by the arrangement, and to hand these matters over to the Ministers for determination. In the event of the Ministers not being able to agree upon any particular rate they are required to refer it to some other person for decision. Clause 5 extends the powers of the Australian Barley Board in two respects. In the first place, it provides that the board may expend money on experiments, research and work, the object of which is to improve or discover means of improving the quality of seed barley. The board is desirous of promoting a scheme for the production of high-grade seed barley which will be available to barley growers with whom the board deals. This scheme, which will be carried out in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture, will involve some relatively small expenditure from the board’s funds. At present there is no authority for such expenditure, but in view of the value of the proposed scheme to growers it appears reasonable that the. board should be empowered to assist it financially. The amounts involved are small.

The other power conferred on the board by clause 5 is to charter ships for the transport of barley and other cargo between ports of the Commonwealth. The clause provides, however, that cargo other than barley can only be carried as back loading, because the board has no desire to enter into the shipping business for general cargo in competition with shipping companies. In fact, the board has already chartered a small ketch which is engaged in transporting barley between coastal ports in South Australia and occasionally makes voyages to Melbourne. Possibly the power to do this is already implied in the Act, but as doubts have been raised about the matter, and the

board’s expenditure has to pass a strict audit it is proposed to grant the power expressly.

Clause 6 enables the board to set aside into a reserve fund the small balances which some times remain after the growers have been paid for a season’s barley. It not infrequently happens that after the last distribution has been made for a season’s barley there are very small sums of money left which are so small as barely to pay the cost of the cheques and postage involved in sending them to the growers. Legally the board is required to pay out all these sums to the growers in each season, but it would obviously be uneconomic to do so and the board has, in practice, allowed the money to accumulate as a reserve for contingencies. It is desirable to give a legal power for this practice to continue. Clause 6 confers such power and provides for the building up and investment of the reserve fund and empower the board to use it to meet such expenditure or liabilities of the board as it deems proper. I have conferred with the Victorian Minister of Agriculture on the terms of this Bill. He visited me in Adelaide and we discussed the matter with members of the Barley Board and the Parliamentary Draftsman before agreeing on the details. The Victorian Bill, the second reading speech on which was to be made last Tuesday, is identical with the Bill now before us, and the Victorian Minister has assured me that barley growers in Victoria are just a anxious as those in this State for the re enactment of the legislation; therefore I feel satisfied that members will give the Bill their most sympathetic consideration.

Mr. 0 ’HALLORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.