**FERTILIZERS BILL 1898**

**House of Assembly, 13 September 1898, pages164-5**

Second reading

**The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. V. O’Loughlin),** in moving the second reading, said the measure was intended to give greater powers than those contained in the fertilizers Act of 1894. It had been found that that measure was to a certain extent defective, and did not accomplish as efficiently as could be desired the object for which it was passed. The Act of 1894 provided that the seller should give an invoice with any parcels of manure sold, and the purchaser had a right to get those manures analysed by the Government Analyst so as to see that they were up to requirements. In practice it had been found that that did not operate very well. The farmers purchasing had not gone to the trouble in many instances of submitting samples for analysis, and consequently a good deal of inferior fertilizers had been sold. The present Bill provided that the seller should give an invoice, and that much further and fuller particulars should be supplied in that invoice than were required under the Act of 1894. That was set out clearly in clause 10, which provided that the constituents of the manures should be declared by the vendor. It was also provided that Corporations and District Councils should have the power to recommend the appointment of meal Inspectors by the Government. When an Inspector was appointed that officer could at any time enter a, place where ferti­lizers were sold and take samples for analysis. Clauses 5 and 6 dealt with the

powers conferred on Inspectors, and provision was made for the publication of the results of any analysis. No doubt the fact that any dealer was liable to have the result of an analysis of his wares publish would have a salutary effect in making reputable dealers see that the goods he sold were what they represented them to be. Three samples were required to be taken by an Inspector, one of which was intended for analysis, another had to be delivered to the vendor, and the third would be retained by the Inspector for future comparison. Section 7 provided that the result of any analysis should be published in the Journal of Agriculture, or in such manner as the Minister of Education and Agriculture might direct. It might be well topublish the results in the daily papers, and thus give fuller circulation to what had been done under that section as a warning to purchasers and a deterrent to vendors. Clause 8 provided for certain marks and particulars to be affixed to every parcel of over a hundredweight for the purpose of identifying the seller. Clause 10 was very important. It set out the particulars without which no invoice by a vendor should be regarded as sufficient for the purposes of the Bill. Subsection 12 provided that the value per unit per ton which the seller attached to each constituent of any fertilizer should be stated in the invoice, such unit value to be the basis of valuation. He could best illustrate how that provision would operate by citing the case of a man in Victoria who recently advertised certain manure for £5 per ton, with an intimation that it had been analysed by the Government Analyst, who certified it to be worth £6 7s. 6d. per ton. That statement, however, was absolutely untrue, and on an analysis of that manure being made it was found to consist of 95 of nitrogen, valued at 8s. per unit per ton, or 7s. 6d.; 2.30 of phosphoric acid, valued at 3s. per unit per ton, which was equal to 6s. 9d.; and .80 of potash, valued at 3s. 2d. per unit per ton. In other words the total value of the manure was 17s. 5d. per ton. Under the provisions of this Bill such a case would be impossible. It was hardly necessary for him to dwell on the necessity for cultivators being assured that the fertilizers which they used were of good quality, so that they were not victimised by having inferior articles thrust upon them. It was encouraging to know that the use of artificial manures in the colony was on the increase. Last year 50,000 acres was sown with the seed-drill, and this year it was estimated that 200,000 acres would be sown by that means, whilst the value of the manures was estimated at £60,000. By the use of superphosphates ana bone-dust on land of the value of from 4s. to 8s. an acre the yield had been doubled, and in some instances more than doubled. In wheat crops an increase of from three to five bushels per acre had been secured by the use of manures over unmanured land alongside. During the first six months of the present year the quantity of local manures used was:—Superphosphates and blood manure, 3,500 tons, valued at £18,400; guano, 2,500 tons, valued at £5,600; or altogether 6,000 tons, valued at £24,000. They had also imported 8,300 tons of manures, valued at £35,000, making a total of over 14,000 tons, valued at £59,000. The use of those manures, therefore, was becoming very general, and very important to the entire community. It hasbeen suggested that the Victorian Fertilizers Act would be a good one to follow and that some of the provisions of the present Bill were too drastic. He saw by the “Age” of September 3, however, that there had been a meeting of Victorian fruitgrowers in reference to the Manures Act of that colony. Mr. Dowling was reported to have urged the Government to appoint an Inspector under the Manures Act. Mr. Jackson seconded the motion. Mr. Peers said that a sample of manure which he had purchased had panned out one-eighth manure and the balance quartz sand, while another simple consisted almost entirely of washing soda. It would thus be seen that the Victorian Act was not working satisfactorily, although he did not pretend to say whether the fault was due to bad administration or to the Act itself. The present Bill was founded on the experience of the Act of 1894, and from the way in which a similar Act had operated in the United States he thought it would be found that the Bill was in no way too drastic, and that its provisions would be of great advantage to our producers.

The Hon. A. W. SANDE'ORD secured the adjournment of the debate until Wednesday, September 14.