METROPOLITAN MILK SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1956

House of Assembly, 1 November 1956, page 1369

Second reading

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Metropolitan Milk Supply Act, 1946-1955. Read a first time.

**The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Agriculture)—**I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It has been rendered necessary by the flooding of the reclaimed dairy lands along the River Murray. In the ordinary course of events the metropolitan area would during the first five months of next year require large supplies of milk from these areas, amounting to 15,000 gallons a day at the maximum. The Metropolitan Milk Board has reported to the Government that the flooding of the reclaimed areas has resulted in the dispersal of the herds to various localities both inside and outside the present metropolitan producing district, while others are being held on the high lands adjacent to the homesteads. It is clear that production from these herds will be considerably reduced, because the dry pastures will not have the same feed value as those grown under irrigation. The Milk Board anticipates that the production from these herds may, during the autumn months, be approximately 5,000 gallons a day short of requirements.

The board will accordingly be obliged to seek supplies from areas outside the normal metropolitan producing district and has already made inquiries about this matter. Although no definite assurances have been received, the board has good reason to believe that it will be possible to obtain the necessary milk. In order to do so, however, the board will be obliged to go outside the usual sources of supply, that is to obtain milk produced by producers who are not licensed under the Metropolitan Milk Supply Act. The milk will be purchased by wholesalers in the metropolitan area from wholesalers in country districts who receive milk from producers not licensed under the Act. At present milk produced by an unlicensed person cannot be sold as whole milk in the metropolitan area. For this reason it is necessary to have legislation to enable the additional milk to be obtained from abnormal sources of supply.

The chairman of the Milk Board has already carried out investigations in the districts southeast of the River Murray as to whether milk supplies can be obtained, and he is hopeful that from that source the necessary supplies will be forthcoming. The machinery proposed in the Bill is that the board will issue permits to the holders of milk treatment licences—i.e., wholesalers in the metropolitan area—authorizing them to buy chilled milk from factories or milk depots in country areas. The permits will contain conditions as to the amount of milk which can be bought, and requirements as to its quality and price, and any other matters required in the public interest. The milk purchased in accordance with a permit will be legally available for retail sale within the metropolitan area in the same way as milk produced by the holder of a milk producer’s licence.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.