**MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1954**

**Legislative Assembly, 19 August 1954 page 422**

Second reading

**The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN (Minister of Agriculture**)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Marketing of Eggs Act was 'first passed in 1941. Under it the board was to remain in operation until the expiration of six months after the Governor-General issued a proclamation declaring that the war with Germany, existing at the time of the passing of this Act, had ceased. In 1945 Parliament agreed to the extension of the Marketing of Eggs Act until September 30, 1949. In September 1949, Parliament agreed to a further extension of the Act until September 30, 1954. For the first 12 months of the board’s operations—the year ended June 30, 1944— 9,663,346 dozen eggs were received by the board. They were valued at £792,352. For the year ended June 30, 1954, the board received 12,040,469 dozen eggs, their value being £2,364,447. The gross value of all grades of eggs was 3s. 11.13d. a dozen, and the net value was 3s. 5.15d. a dozen. For the year 1953/54 exports of eggs in shell totalled 1,257,120 dozen, their value being £219,347; and the export of eggs in pulp totalled 5,066,990 dozen, their value being £1,116,687. Total exports were 6,324,110 dozen, valued at £1,336,034. A total of 4,584,693 dozen eggs were sold in shell locally, their value being £999,059; and eggs in pulp form sold locally amounted to 1,131,666 dozen, the value of £241,750. The total local trade was 5,716,359 dozen, to a value of £1,240,509. In regard to the costs of handling, the agents’ charges (including receiving, grading, testing, packing, and accounting to producers) totalled 4 1/2d. a dozen, and the pool deduction was 1 1/2d., making total deductions 6d. a dozen. I refer members to section 16 of the Act, which gives the Auditor General the authority to examine the board’s accounts. Under that section he is required to report on:—

(а) whether the prices at which during that year eggs were bought and sold by the board and sold by retailers to the public were reasonable ;

(b) whether the board has been economical in its expenditure on the administration of this Act and on the collection, transport, grading, treatment and marketing of eggs.

That is a very wide power, and if members will look at the last Auditor Generals report at page 159 they will find that the accounts are well dissected, and on the following page the balance sheet is published. The costs of exporting eggs are considerable. The cost of placing eggs in shell on board, including cases, fillers, storage, and Australian Egg Board levy amounted to 5d. a dozen.

The Egg Marketing Board for this year is faced with a new set of circumstances for all surplus export eggs in shell, and egg pulp is now on a competitive market. The last long-term contract expired on May 31, with a completion of the sale of egg pulp to the United Kingdom. For the season 1954/55 the board is faced with the difficulty of competitive prices on the free market. This is the first year since 1939 that this position has arisen. In addition, owing to the large supplies of egg pulp held by the United Kingdom which were purchased under long-term contracts, a quota of 10,000 tons which Australia will be allowed to forward to the United Kingdom has been enforced.

For the year 1953-54 Australia shipped almost 16,000 tons of pulp to the United Kingdom and the placing of a quota on this means that a much greater quantity of eggs in shell will have to be shipped so that quantities of pulp can be kept within the quota. I mentioned recently, in answer to a question by the Member for Newcastle, that the contracts so far concluded in respect of pulp totalled 3,500 tonnes at £215 a ton. Of course, for the balance of the quota the price has yet to be arranged. The egg industry in South Australia is now showing definite signs of increased production, and receivals for this pool year are about 10 per cent above those of last year. It is estimated from the time the eggs leave the producers farms until they reach the consumers in the United Kingdom the cost is 2s. a dozen. The Bill extends the operation of the Act for three years. An approach has been made to the Commonwealth Government for a subsidy on export eggs for the ensuing season because of the much more difficult situation that has arisen, and I hope that some assistance will be forthcoming.

Mr. LAWN secured the adjournment debate.