**LOANS TO PRODUCERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1946**

**Legislative Assembly, 10 September 1946, pages 447-8**

Second reading

**The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS (Newcastle—Minister of Agriculture)—**The object of this Bill is to widen the scope of the Loans to Producers Act so as to enable the State Bank to make loans to finance the development of the fishing industry. Since the end of the war there has been a good deal of renewed interest in fishing. Much thought has been given to the possibilities of fishing on a larger scale than in the past and obtaining a greatly increased output. The Chief Inspector of Fisheries considers that in order to obtain the best results in this industry fishermen should use larger boats than have been common in the past and should work together in teams. The provision of larger boats and equipment on a larger scale necessitates improved arrangements for finance, and representatives of the fishermen have asked the Government for an amendment to the Loans to Producers Act on the lines of this Bill. The Chief Inspector of Fisheries also considers that such an amendment would be of benefit to the industry.

The details of the Bill are quite simple. Clause 3 enables the State Bank to make loans out of the Loans to Producers Fund for the purpose of enabling any individual or association to purchase ships, boats, buildings, and equipment to be used in the fishing industry, and to meet other expenses incurred in that industry. Clause 4 is a purely consequential amendment. Clause 5 provides that any person who receives a loan under the Bill must give security to the bank for the repayment of it. The nature of the security will be determined by the bank. Clauses 6 and 7 are further consequential amendments of the principal Act, rendered necessary by clause 3 of the Bill.

The entry of our returned servicemen in particular into the fishing industry has given it a noticeable fillip. By teaming up, some of these men have been able to purchase large boats with refrigerated holds, which enable them to do. deep-sea fishing. Several boats are 55ft. or more in length, one being 72ft. These men are engaged primarily in long-lining for sharks, but hand-lining for snapper and whiting or trolling for snook and barracouta can also be done. However, many are prevented from launching out because of insufficient capital. The amendments introduced by this Bill will make it possible for approved applicants to obtain the funds required to set themselves up with better gear and better boats. Seventeen months ago 28 men from Beachport, Robe, Kingston, and Streaky Bay formed the South Australian Fisherman's Co-operative Society, with only £33 capital. To-day their membership is no less than 130, with a subscribed capital of more than £5,000. In the past spoilage of fish, has been relatively heavy, mainly because of insufficient or ineffective freezing plants. If given the opportunity to obtain funds on loan to install suitable freezers, the society’s losses .in this respect should be eliminated. The £920 worth of fish so lost last year would have represented. a handsome return on even a £10,000 loan. Freezers will give stability to the industry and thus pave the way for increased production.

In the past, members of the society, and fishermen generally, were frequently forced to cease fishing, it being impossible with the existing inadequate plant to handle their sur­plus catches satisfactorily. That the society is progressing can be judged from the following:—

1. The society was formed with a membership of 28 and only £33 capital.
2. Trading commenced 17 months ago, that is, on February 1, 1945.
3. To-day there are 130 members.
4. Assets now total almost £9,000.
5. Subscribed capital amounts to £5,100.
6. Distributed bonuses (all re-invested1) total £2,500.
7. Reserves stand at £1,000.
8. Wages paid at outports. (a) to permanent port managers—£986; (b) to members’ wives and daughters and other temporary employees:—(1) for filleting— £1,068; (2) for cray cooking—£748.
9. Total sales for 1946 were £42,600.
10. Losses of fish by condemnation for 1946 totalled £920.

It is expected that the formation of co-operative societies to handle and. conserve the surpluses which must necessarily occur in times of plenty in the fishing industry will put into consumption large quantities of fish which have hitherto been wasted. I move the second reading.

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