**MARGARINE ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1956**

**Legislative Assembly, 24 October 1956, page 1190**

Second reading

**The Hon. G. G. PEARSON (Minister of Agriculture**), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Margarine Act, 1939-1952. Read a first time.

The Hon. G. G. PEARSON—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its object is to increase the amount of table margarine which may be manufactured in the State. The principal. Act was passed in 1939 and was part of an Australia-wide scheme promoted by the Agricultural Council to protect the dairy industry. The principle accepted was that the margarine manufacturers should be allowed to continue their business on the scale on which they were then operating. The principal Act provides for the licensing of manufacturers of margarine and for the Minister of Agriculture to declare each year by notice in the Gazette the maximum quantity of table margarine which a manufacturer may manufacture during the year. Pursuant to these provisions’ quotas were declared for theSouth Australian companies, amounting in all to 312 tons a year. This amount was temporarily reduced during the war, but was restored in 1948.

In 1952 a Bill was introduced by the Opposition to increase the maximum quantity of table margarine which might be manufactured in the State to 624 tons. The Government thought the proposed increase was not justified, but took the view that an increase of 50 per cent was reasonable because of the increase in the population of the State since 1938. Accordingly, the maximum quantity was increased from 312 to 468 tons.

Since this increase the population of the State has increased by approximately 13 per cent. The demand for table margarine is strong. There are two firms manufacturing table margarine at present in South Australia, each having an annual quota of 234 tons. They both regularly exhaust their quotas in the first eight months of the year. The Government has decided that in all the circumstances the amount of table margarine which may be manufactured in the State should be increased in proportion to the increase in population since 1952. Accordingly, the Government proposes to increase the amount from 468 to 528 tons a year.

At the same time the Government considers that steps should be taken to ensure that table margarine manufactured in South Australia should be available to consumers throughout the year. It is therefore proposed that the amount which a manufacturer may sell in each month shall be restricted to an allowance of one-twelfth of his annual quota, plus any unsold balance of the allowances for previous months.

The details of the Bill are as follows:— Clause 3 increases the maximum quantity of table margarine which the Minister of Agriculture may permit to be manufactured in South Australia in any year from 468 to 528 tons. The increase will apply from January 1, 1957. Clause 3 also requires the Minister, on fixing a quota for a manufacturer, to state that the manufacturer must not sell in any month more than the monthly allowance indicated in the notice fixing the quota, plus the unsold balance of monthly allowances for previous months in the period to which the quota relates. The monthly allowance is calculated by dividing the quota for the whole period, which is ordinarily a year, by the number of months in the period. The clause makes it an offence for a manufacturer to sell in any month an excess quantity of table margarine.

Clause 4 contains transitional provisions. Quotas for 1957 may have already been fixed before this Bill becomes law and if so, it will be desirable to alter them. Accordingly, clause 4 provides for the fixing of new quotas and the declaration of monthly allowances for 1957. If no quotas are fixed for 1957 before the commencement of the Bill, Clause 4 will enable quotas to be fixed under the Bill less than a month before the period to which the quotas relate. The principal Act requires a notice fixing a quota to be published in the Gazette not less than a month before the commencement of the period. Unless relaxed, this restriction might cause difficulty in the fixing of quotas for 1957. I draw attention to the fact that whenever the word “year” is used in this explanation it means calendar year and not financial year, and the quotas will therefore be fixed for January 1, 1957, for the ensuing 12 months.

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