**METROPOLITAN AND EXPORT ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1962**

**House of Assembly, 20 September 1962, pages 1032-3**

Second reading

**The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture)** obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Act, 1936-1958, and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: I move:

*That this Bill be now read a Second time.*

The purpose of this Bill is to provide for the Minister to be able to grant licences for slaughtering stock and the sale of meat within the metropolitan area. The policy of the Government is to create conditions whereby the interests of all sections of the community are properly observed and it is felt that these interests would be furthered by permission being granted for the establishment of more slaughtering facilities. The Government has for some years had a stated intention of providing killing licences for country abattoirs where these can be established. However, this has not been availed of. The reason is partly due to the ready market to be found in the metropolitan area.

The Metropolitan Abattoirs has been for many years in a favoured position in regard to the Adelaide market as the introduction of meat slaughtered by other interests is strictly controlled. Many of the installations at Gepps Cross are sufficiently large to eater for a population increase in the Adelaide area. It is felt, however, that difficulties of management and operation make it advisable for licences to be granted to other persons for the killing of stock. Any reduction in output has a highly deleterious effect on the interests of primary producers in the first place, and also the consumer is affected and the State’s economy suffers as a result of loss of export killing. All members are aware that at the present time there is a ban on overtime imposed by the union at Gepps Cross. This ban has been placed at a time when it is of the greatest urgency to kill as many stock as are offered. Lambs reach a peak of condition and quickly deteriorate if not slaughtered at the right time. The same applies, though to a lesser extent, to sheep. As a result of the present ban, there has been a serious loss to producers. I do not propose to discuss the merits of the question on which the overtime ban has been imposed. I can briefly outline the position. The union approached the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board seekingan extra week’s sick leave in addition to the week already allowed. The board inform, the union that this was a matter that should be heard by the Abattoirs Industrial Board. It is understood that the overtime ban has been imposed by the union until the extra week’s sick leave is granted.

In a report brought in by a statutory investigating committee on June 30, 1958, it was pointed out that the Abattoirs Board had made a concession relating to sick leave. These provisions are more generous in some respects than most other sick leave provisions and they provide amongst other things, that unused sick leave can be accumulated and at retirement or resignation the unused leave can be taken as a cash sum. This is all that I wish to say about the present dispute. The purpose of this Bill is to make it possible for other persons to slaughter stock in the interests of the community. The operating clauses permit the Minister, if he considers it is expedient in the interests of the public, to grant a licence elsewhere than at the Metropolitan Abattoirs to slaughter any stock for sale. Provisions are made whereby the term of the licence can be made of appropriate length and whereby the Minister can set out requirements dealing with branding and inspection. It will most probably be felt necessary to see that all carcasses are branded (clause 3). It is not proposed to provide for other sale yards but authority is provided in the Bill for auction sales to be allowed with the Minister’s consent as an alternative to the consent of the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board (clause 4).

Members will recognize that this legislation, in providing competition for the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs, could embarrass it in some respects. The public investment in the abattoirs is considerable. It is made up in the following way:

Debenture funds (almost entirely treasury advances) £842,823

Grants (some Commonwealth largely concerning sale yards) £44,433

Internal provisions and reserves reinvested £951,963

Total funds employed in the undertaking £1,839,219

Whilsr this is a considerable sum, it has to be considered in relation to the total value of the State’s livestock industry. Moreover, there is no reason to assume that this public investmeat will be lost. The effect is subject to extent of killing licences that would be granted. It is proposed that these will be studied carefully in order to safeguard the best interests of the public. This is a matter on which the Minister would naturally take care advice.

Mr. FRANK WALSH secured the adjournment of the debate.