**DRAUGHT STALLIONS ACT REPEAL BILL 1955**

**Legislative Assembly, 18 August 1955, pages 579-80**

Second reading

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

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

The purpose is to repeal the Draught Stallions Act 1932 - 1934, and to make provision for matters incidental upon the repeal. The Act was enacted in 1932 for the purpose of encouraging the breeding of draught stock of improved quality and to protect South Australian breeders against the dumping in this State of unsound stallions rejected under similar legislation in other States. The Act provides for the compulsory registration of stallions over two years of age and for the issue of certification of

Soundness and approval to owners of stallions which have been examined by a veterinary officer and which comply with the requisite standards. It is provided by the Act that uncertificated stallions are not to be used for stud purposes.

The registration and other fees which are charged are paid into a Draught Stallions Fund which is to be applied by the Minister to improving the standard of draught stock and generally to encouraging the breeding of draught stock. At June 30, 1955, the amount standing to the credit of the fund was £2,465 10s. 11d. It is considered that, in this mechanical age, the time has passed when the Act serves any useful purpose. Whereas in 1940 there were 2,092 registered draught stallions, during 1954-1955 only 23 stallions were registered, most of which were over seven years old. It is therefore considered that the time has come to repeal the Act and clause 2 of the Bill provides accordingly.

Mr. Frederick Walsh-—What was the object of the Bill in the first place.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—To improve the standard of draught stock by subsidizing the purchase of draught stallions. It is proposed by clause 3 that this repeal will, in effect, operate retrospectively as from July 1955 and clause 3 provides that if any registration fees are paid in respect of the licensing period beginning on July 1, 1955, the Minister may refund those fees. It is also provided that the Minister will have power to dispose of the balance outstanding in the fund and it is proposed that the Minister may use this money for the purpose of providing a scholarship or scholarships in veterinary science or in improving the services provided by the Department of Agriculture for the animal industries of the State.

I have had some figures prepared about the numbers of horses now in Australia, particularly in South Australia, and the numbers 20 years ago. The decrease is astonishing. In 1954 South Australia had a total of 51,807 horses, compared with 196,789 in 1934. Of the horses this State now has, 17,854 are draught stock, 31,249 are light horses, and 2,704 are foals. In Australia there are now 823,000 horses, compared with 1,763,225 in 1934. Australia now has 239,000 draught stock, 539,000 light horses, and 45,000 foals. South Australia has the largest reduction of any State in the number of horses. I have not the figures for every State, but it seems that the reduction has been smallest in Queensland because that State employs many more hacks and light horses for droving purposes than other States. It seems that droving and mustering are done largely by mechanical means in South Australia and some other States, so that the horse is disappearing even in that sphere. I cannot see any revival in the use of the horse for agricultural and allied industries.

The mechanization of farms commenced prior to the depression years, although after the depression there was some resurgence in the use of the horse. Subsequently, with the improvement of farm equipment and the introduction of tractors with pneumatic tyres and the crawler tractor, which have proved far superior to the early mechanical equipment, the horse practically faded out of farm work. It is interesting to recall the price that horses fetched some years ago compared to the price of mechanical equipment and parts. In 1935, when I sold my last team of horses, I realized just sufficient to pay for one tractor tyre and tube.

Mr. Hawker—Were your horses used for crayfish bait 9

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I am glad to say they were not. A farmer bought my horses and used them on his farm. I could not have sold them if they had been intended for crayfish bait, because I was very fond of them. However, present-day youth will not be bothered with animals and the changeover to mechanization of farms was inevitable.

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