**STOCK DISEASES ACT FUTHER AMENDMENT BILL 1915**

**House of Assembly, 26 August 1915, pages 584-6**

Second reading

**The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS (Hon. C. Goode)—**In moving the second reading of this amending measure I feel sure that it will be recognised as one of considerable importance to those interested in the flocks and herds of South Australia. The Bill provides for the declaration of infested areas by means of which the Government will have the authority of law to proclaim an area infested, and compel all owners within that area to dip sheep within a given periood after shearing. At present the Act provides that only where sheep are found infested can the provisions of the Act be enforced, and as it takes an army of inspectors to carry out tne work, the Act is practically a dead letter. It is only in cases where sheep are brought into market and offered for sale that inspectors have an opportunity of finding out if the sheep are infested or not. The Chief Inspector of Stock reports:—

 (1) Under the Stock Diseases Act of 1888 and the regulations dealing with the lice and tick, there is not power to declare “infected areas.” It is important that this power should be given, so that large districts or any part thereof may, by proclamation, be declared infected areas from which sheep must not be moved till they have been dipped.

 (2) All sheep in a district like the South-East are more or less affected with vermin at shearing. Immediately after shearing infected sheep are disposed of by the majority of owners, and are travelled all over the district by dealers. Many buyers have been led to believe that sheep they had bought had been dipped when such was not the case.

 (3) At present individual flocks must be found infected before an inspector can order them to be dipped. In a district like the South-East it would need an army of inspectors to enforce such a provision, as the work should be done in from four to five weeks from the time shearing commences.

 (4) At present many sheepowners evade dipping regulations, under the pretence that their sheep were clean when shorn ; yet the animals are found infested later.

 (5) If the power is given to compel the whole of the sheep in a proclaimed district or area to be dipped off shears, it will be one of the most forward steps towards cleaning the flocks.

 (6) If the Bill becomes law, stringent regulations under it will be necessary.

These are the reasons for the introduction of this measure. Honorable members who have had any experience with sheep will agr*ee* that it is not only in the interests of the state, but of the grazier or breeder, that the sheep should be dipped. Many owners in the north are not troubled to any extent with tick or lice in their flocks, but dip their sheep because they consider it improves the quality of the wool, and prevents the dust from getting into it, with the result that better price is obtained which more than compensates them for the cost of dipping. If it pays the northern owners to dip their how much more will it pay those living in districts infested with tick if they resort to similar methods and get the corresponding benefits that will accrue. Unfortunately, there are sections of the community trading in sheep who are not owners for any length of time, and who have not the the same interests in the flocks they are handling as those who are not owners for any length of time, and who have not the same interests in the flocks they are handling as those who hold their sheep through the year. I am inclined to thin that it is these sections that are attempting to evade the regulations in force. When at Mount Gambier recently I was waited upon by graziers and dealers who made representations to me in connection with this matter, and who said that the regulations should be suspended, as that had been done in Victoria in consequence of the sheep being too weak to dip. I pointed out that the reason submitted was a fair one, and that as it had been done in Victoria similar provision would be made here. I heard afterwards that some of the persons present at that deputation knew that the statement made in regard to Victorian sheep was not correct, and that a small section of dealers was anxious to evade the law. It was ascertained later that the sheep which were supposed to be too weak for dipping were being yarded and railed to different parts of the State, so their argument fell to the ground. This was an attempt on the part of a small section to take advantage of the Act, and the attitude adopted was unfair, and one which I, as Minister, could not tolerate. Arrangements were made, however, that in the event of a man having ewes and lambs on his holdings the regulations would not be enforced until after shearing as long as he kept them on his holding. In the case of a man being compelled to sell in order to meet his obligations he was to apply to the nearest inspector of stock for permission to market his sheep, and each case would then be treated on its merits. An attempt was made to bring this arrangement into ridicule. I saw a placard that was sent to Mr. Reidy concerning tick-infested sheep, and also an advertisement in the paper concerning the matter. I think that was the only case in which sheep were yarded, and an attempt made to sell under those conditions. It was evidently only a put-up case in order to bring ridicule upon the conditions laid down. I am confident that the arrangements were satisfactory, but I was very much surprised that some of the men who attempted to take advantage of the regulations used their positions and influence in the direction they did. The regulations under the Stock Diseases Act are framed not for the benefit of any particular Government, but in the interests of the stockowners of this State, and I believe the passageof this Bill will servein assisting our pastoral industry. We want to encourage pastoral pursuits, and all practical men will admit that in districts infested with tick it will pay the stockowner to go to the expense of putting in a dip, because he will be gaining by so doing, and at the same time will not be jeopardising the interests of other people engaged in the industry.

Mr. PICK—I support the Bill, which I consider very necessary. It is only those who have handled sheep in country where they have become infested with tick and lice who can appreciate the necessity for such a measure. It is strange that so many people have to be compelled to dip their sheep, but the fact remains that the Government officials should be armed with the authority to compel dipping, and that even so many people do try to evade it. I would not like to say what the very considerable loss to this State is through the ravages of vermin. I am not sure that the Act provides that the sheep must be dipped in an approved dip, but if it does not it is necessary, for some people mix their own dips and these often are not very effective. The clause of the Bill to give the Commissioner power to proclaim certain districts vermin infested is very necessary, because, although I believe that the tick and lice are at present confined to the southern end of the State, there is nothing to prevent their spreading through the districts of the Middle North, and they will spread still further unless efficient control is provided.

Mr. MOSELEY—I am not only in accord with the Bill, but also with the remarks of the Minister. The measure does not affect my northern district. The heat of the sun there destroys all tick, but the Bill is very necessary, nevertheless, to the State. If it is going to be of benefit it must not be left for one man to faithfully dip his flocks and another next door to him to do as he pleases. I wish to pay tribute to the splendid work of our Stock Inspecting Department. The inspectors have done wonderfully well in the interests of the stock of the State. Years ago pleuro was rampant, and swine fever also. To-day these diseases have been practically stamped out. Seeing that such fine work as this has been done in certain branches, it is a pity that careless people should be allowed to disseminate disease among the sheep flocks throughout the state.

Mr. REIDY - I support the measure. The reason why the farmers and flock owners in the South-East required the suspension of the regulations was that the sheep were too weak to be dipped. Many of those gentlemen were anxious that the regulations should be suspended until the sheep were strong enough. If there have been where certain people were prepared to take advantage of the suspension of the regulations I trust honorable members will not think that that applies to the flock

owners of the South-East, many of who advocate dipping as firmly as owners in other portions of the State. They have complained however, that the inspector did not use sufficient discretion, because if sheep had only one or two tick they were branded tick-infested with the same brand as if there were a number of tick. It was though that those sheep not badly infested should be allowed to go on when they were being sold only from one farmer to another in the same district. I entirely agree that the power should be given to say in what districts the Bill should apply.

The COMMISSIONER of PUBLIC WORKS—As it is hardly necessary for this Bill now to go through the Committee stage, and I think some honorable members would like to speak on it and have not yet had an opportunity to critically examine the measure, I ask leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted ; adjourned debate made an Order of the Day for August 31.