**STOCK DISEASES (POULTRY) BILL 1924**

**House of Assembly, 21 October 1924, pages 1159-61**

Second reading

**The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS (Hon. T. Butterfield)—**The object of this Bill is to make special provision with respect to the application of the Stock Disease Act, 1888, to poultry. That Act already applies to poultry by reason of a notice published in the “Government Gazette” in 1907, bringing poultry within the definition of “stock”, and declaring that the Act shall apply to poultry. But in practice there are many difficulties in the way of making the application effectivefor the purpose of eradicating or preventing the spread of disease in poultry. The scheme of the Stock Diseases Act was drawn up with reference to four-footed animals, and it can easily be seen that many anomalies would arise when it was sought to apply it to bipeds. Moreover, the quarantine provisions of the Act contemplate only the quarantine of the animals themselves, and not the quarantine of the premises where they may be found. Whilst this may be effective to check the spread of disease in stock it is not so with poultry. The pri­cipal poultry disease against which this measure is aimed is poultry tick and poultry lice. This pest infests not only the fowls themselves, but also the fowl houses and everything used in connection with poultry, and for the effectual eradication of the pest it is absolutely essential that an inspector of poultry should have complete control over both animals and premises with power to quarantine either or both. There is another difficulty which arises in the administration of the Stock Diseases Act as applied to poultry. Under the Stock DiseasesAct, 1888, the Governor has power to appoint inspectors of stock, and such inspectors when appointed are inspectors with respect to every kind of stock. But for these inspectors to exercise to the fullest extent the powers conferred upon inspectors by the Act they must possess certain qualifications, and hold a certificate in accordance with regulations made under the Act. There is no power to exempt any person from this requirement, or to appoint inspectors with respect to particular kinds of stock. It is obviously unnecessary that an inspector exercising his duties only with respect to poultry, for instance, should be an expert in diseases affecting great cattle, but this is, in effect, how the law now stands. Clause 5 obviates this by providing that the Governor may appoint inspectors of poultry, and that an inspector of poultry shall have, with respect to poultry, the same rights, powers, and authorities as an inspector of stock, duly qualified and certificated, has under the Stock Diseases Act with respect to stock. In addition to the powers conferred by clause 5, an inspector of poultry has the additional powers set out in clause 6, these powers having special reference to the fact that poultry tick or lice may exist in premises years after, and quite apart from, the existence of poultry thereon. Under clause 6, an inspector of poultry may enter any premises where poultry is kept or which he has reason to believe to be infested with poultry tick or poultry lice. He may then give directions for anything to be done with respect to the premises, the poultry, and any fittings used in connection with poultry, or which are found to be infested with poultry tick or poultry lice, which he considers necessary to eradicate or check the spread of disease or to eradicate the tick or lice. Under the Stock Diseases Act he has power to quarantine the birds themselves. Under this clause he may, if necessary, also quarantine the premises, and the premises will remain in quarantine until an inspector of poultry is satisfied that the premises are free from the pest or that his directions have been complied with, and he certifies to that effect. This power of quarantine will be particularly useful with respect to poultry auction marts in Adelaide, many of which are very badly infested with tick. If a direction of the inspector is not complied with, the inspector has power to carry out the directions himself, and the cost of so doing is recoverable by the Minister administering the Act as a debt from the person who is in default. For the present the application of the measure is limited to the metropolitan, area (clause 3), as it is only within the thickly populated centres in that area that the immediate necessity for the Bill arises. The measure does not apply to farms, where poultry is bred as a sideline. I think that is the particular ground on which a somewhat similar provision was opposed when a Bill was previously introduced here. The contention of members then was that if a poultry inspector could go on a farm and order a shed in which poultry were to be burnt down or destroyed it would be very serious for the farmers of the country, and rather than a risk of that kind should be taken there was a good deal of opposition. Should occasion require it,there is power to extend the operation of the measure by resolution of both Houses of Parliament. Clause 7 is an evidentiary provision in aid of clause 3. The only other matter in the Bill calling for comment is the definition of “disease” as applied to poultry (clause 3). This term includes the disease affecting poultry specifically set out in the definition, and the state of being infested with poultry tick or poultry lice, and also any other diseases affecting poultry which the Governor by notice in the “Gazette” declares to be a disease for the purposes of the Act. The main effect will be to give stock inspectors under the Act the power to destroy a bird. At present they have no such power, and infested birds may be hawked from one sale to another. In general, it may be said that the provisions of the Bill are of an administrative character and non-controversial, and are necessary to conserve and advance the interests of poultry breeders and of the poultry industry generally. The importance of the poultry industry to South Australia may be realised when it is stated that the Poultry Expert estimates that the annual value of the industry is about £1,250,000. That may be a surprise to those of us who are not brought into direct contact with the business of poultry raising, apart from having a few fowls in our back yards. In view of that production from the poultry industry, steps should be taken to see that those whose business it is to promote it are protected in every way possible. I hope members will carry this Bill, which. I am assured is verynecessary.

The Hon. G. B. Laffer—An important aspect is the fact that a considerable export trade is done through the poultry industry.

The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS -That is taken into account in the computation at the value of the industry to this State. It is an export trade which can be extended safely , with prospects of profit in the future. I commend the measure to the House and move the second reading.

Mr. HEGGATON secured the adjournment of the debate until October 22.