**MEAT HYGIENE ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1986**

**Legislative Assembly, 3 December 1986, page 2679**

Second reading

**The Hon. M.K. MAYES (Minister of Agriculture)** obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Meat Hygiene Act 1980. Read a first time.

The Hon. M.K. MAYES: I move: That this Bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading explanation inserted in Hansard without my reading it. Leave granted.

Explanation of Bill

In recognition of the increased role of the Commonwealth in the provision of meat inspection services envisaged by the Meat Inspection (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 1986, it is appropriate to grant it a seat on the Meat Hygiene Authority, presently made up of:

(a) the Chief Inspector of Meat Hygiene (who is automatically the Chairman);

(b) a nominee from the Minister of Health; and

(c) a nominee from the Local Government Association.

The Commonwealth has had observer status on the authority for some time, and the new member of the authority will be a nominee of the relevant Commonwealth Minister. It is also appropriate to amend sections 50, 51 and 52 of the Meat Hygiene Act which relate to the role of State Inspectors.

Section 55 of the Meat Hygiene Act presently prohibits the sale of pet food unless it was produced at a licensed pet food works. This creates an anomaly in that it also prohibits the sale of pet food from an abattoir, which the Act was never intended to do. The fact that abattoirs have full-time meat inspection means that meat that is not passed as fit for human consumption may, at the discretion of an inspector, be passed as fit for consumption by pets. This has always been the case and the amendment will correct this legal anomaly. A consequential amendment to section 60 is also required. The provisions of this Bill are as follows:

Clause 1 is formal.

Clause 2 provides for commencement on a proclaimed day.

Clause 3 amends section 6 of the Meat Hygiene Act 1980, which provides for the constitution of the Meat Hygiene Authority. Under section 6, the authority currently consists of three persons—the Chief Inspector of Meat Hygiene, the nominee of the Minister of Health and the nominee of the Local Government Association. This clause amends the section by increasing the number of members to four and providing that the additional member is to be the nominee of the Commonwealth Minister responsible for the Commonwealth Meat Inspection Act 1983.

Clause 4 makes a consequential amendment to section 9 of the principal Act to increase the quorum of the authority from two to three members.

Clause 5 amends section 50 of the principal Act in relation to slaughtering at licensed abattoirs taking place in the presence of a State Inspector. The effect of the amendment will be that slaughtering may take place in the presence of a Commonwealth inspector. This amendment and the amendments contained in clauses 6 and 7 are required for the purposes of the reference of legislative powers to the Commonwealth proposed by the Meat Inspection (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 1986.

Clause 6 amends section 51 of the principal Act in relation to the branding of meat. The amendment will mean that branding may be done by or at the direction of a State or Commonwealth inspector.

Clause 7 amends section 52 of the principal Act and its effect will be that meat produced at a licensed abattoir may not be sold unless it is passed, as fit for human consumption, by a State or Commonwealth inspector.

Clause 8 amends section 55 of the principal Act which presently prohibits the sale of pet food produced at premises other than licensed pet food works. The amendment will mean that pet food produced at licensed abattoirs may also be sold.

Clause 9 amends section 60 of the principal Act which contains evidentiary provisions. The effect of the amendment will be that an allegation (in a complaint in proceedings for an offence) that any pet food was not produced at a licensed abattoir or pet food works will be taken as proof unless the contrary is shown. This amendment is consequential to the amendment proposed to be made to section 55 of the principal Act.

Mr GUNN secured the adjournment of the debate.