STOCK DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1962

Legislative Council, 24 October 1962, pages 1665--6

Second reading

Received from the House of Assembly and read a first time.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Chief Secretary) : I move:

That this Bill be note read a second time.

This Bill makes three amendments to the principal Act. The first amendment is made by clause 3 which will add to the definition of "animal product", honey, bees-wax, and all raw, partially cooked, manufactured, or pro­cessed/ animal products. The definition at the moment covers only meat, fat, milk, whey, cream, butter, cheese, eggs and stock semen. The reason for the amendment is that the present definition cannot be construed to include manufactured meats such as salami, metwurst and the like. Health certificates in respect of such goods from other States where swine fever may be present cannot be required under the Act and in effect this means that their entry into the State cannot be prevented. It is considered that there is a serious risk of the introduction of swine fever through the uncontrolled introduction of such goods. At the same time it is considered desirable to widen the definition to cover honey and beeswax since bees are now declared to be stock for the purposes of the Act.

Clause 4 will add to the regulation-making power a new power to make regulations authorizing the Minister to require an owner" to sell for the purpose of slaughter any" sheep quarantined by reason of foot-rot or any sheep, which have been exposed to foot-rot infection. Sheep affected with foot-rot remain under quarantine for an indefinite period while the owner cannot be forced to take effective steps for the eradication of the disease. It appears that foot-rot can be eradicated from any property within three years and the effect of the amendment will be to permit regulations to give the Minister powers to require such sheep to be sold for slaughter unless proper steps for the eradication of the disease are taken.

Clause 5 inserts a new subsection into section 19 of the principal Act which requires owners of diseased stock, under penalty, to notify the Chief Inspector, keep the stock from coming into contact with stock belonging to others and if so ordered to destroy diseased stock. The new subsection will provide that proof that stock are in fact diseased shall in any proceedings be prima fade evidence that the owner knew or suspected that the stock was diseased. It was decided earlier this year that, in order to succeed in proceedings under section 19, the prosecution must prove actual knowledge or actual suspicion on the part of the stock owner which makes it extremely difficult to police the Act. The new subsection will materially assist in the enforcement of section 19. I commend the Bill for the consideration of honourable members.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS secured the adjournment of the debate.