DAIRY PRODUCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1938

Legislative Assembly, 20 October 1938, pages 1448-9

Second reading

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Gumeracha— Commissioner of Crown Lands)—I think members generally will agree that the Bill is one which does not require any great explanation. Its sole purpose is to further extend for two years the operations of the Dairy Produce Act, 1934-37, which was previously extended for two years until September 30 this year. We have debated regulations under the Act fairly generally on previous occasions. The House was content to accept the regulations which wert made as it recognized the claims of those engaged in the industry. The original Bill was subject to a tremendous amount of discussion, and I think members will concede that the Dairy Produce Board has exercised the power Parliament vested in it reasonably and in the best interests of the community as a whole. It would be an untold calamity if the legislation were not re-enacted at this stage and the industry were allowed to drift back into the chaotic condition which existed before the first legislation was passed. The reasons which necessitated the introduction of the legislation originally still exist. Dairymen are required to produce their product in a country where everything they purchase is more costly, due to tariff protection, and must sell on an unprotected world market. Unless there is some measure of justice done, to them by legislation—

Mr. Craigie—Even at the risk of injustice to the ‘"other section".’

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Other sections of the community are, in the main, enjoying similar protection. Nearly all those engaged in the primary industries of Australia today have been assisted in some way or other to enable them to economically compete.

The Hon. J. Mclnnes—What about the industrial worker?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I think the Arbitration Courts have attempted to give protection to the industrial workers.

Mr. Craigie—And have left them in the position they were in under the Harvester award of 1907.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If Mr. Mclnnes will look at the Auditor-General’s report he will see what benefit the industry has obtained under the legislation. There has not been any excessive use of the powers given to the board, and no unwarranted price has been placed on butter sold here.

Mr. Craigie—Is that not because the board realized there would be a limitation in demand if the price went any higher?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The purpose of the Bill is merely to extend the functions of the Act for another two years. I move the second reading.

The Hon. R. S. RICHARDS (Wallaroo— Leader of the Opposition)—I feel that the legislation has been of much value to dairymen generally, and do not think it has interfered to a large extent with the section that has been referred to as the ‘"other section". Much dissatisfaction still exists amongst dairymen who are outside the recognized organizations concerning the work of departmental officers and inspectors. They claim that inspectors whose duty it is to check up on factories supposedly in the interests of the dairymen themselves are not fulfilling the functions of their office. Last week I had a deputation from people interested in the dairying industry who pointed out the desirableness of reviewing the legislation. These people believe that there is collusion between some of the factories and inspectors, inasmuch as the interests of the dairymen are being sacrificed continually because factories are allowed to practise certain methods. I suggest that the Minister cause inquiries to be made and, if possible, that he should get not only the opinion of those dairymen directly associated with dairymen’s organizations, but if possible that he should ascertain the views of dairymen not belonging to any association. Quite a number agree with Mr. Craigie concerning the right to sell butter manufactured on the farm within their local town. They contend that the present regulation inflicts hardship on them and should be amended to permit of their manufacturing a greater quantity than is permitted at present without committing a breach of the Act. It is not my intention to delay the passage of the Bill, but after the long and detailed explanation given by the Minister I thought it would not be quite the thing to allow an important measure of this kind to go through without debate and I wish to extend my thanks to the Minister for his detailed explanation of the measure.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment.