

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, September 3, 1968.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

ASSENT TO BILLS

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the following Bills:

Fruit Fly (Compensation),
Supply (No. 2).

QUESTIONS

ISLINGTON CROSSING

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: On July 31 I directed a question to the Minister of Roads and Transport about the railway crossing at Islington on Regency Road, and he was good enough to promise me that he would have inquiries made about the possibility of widening that crossing. Has he a reply yet?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I regret that so far I have not the reply that the honourable Leader then sought. I hoped to have it today but, unfortunately, some other matters connected with crossings, and particularly the one at Roseworthy, occupied much of my time last week, when the Railways Commissioner and I personally inspected that crossing. I appreciate the Leader's concern about the Islington crossing.

As I mentioned at the time, it concerns me greatly, too, and the recent occurrence of another fatality there is certainly a sufficient reason why urgent attention must be given to the matter. I promise I will take it up with the Railways Commissioner and hope to have a reply for the Leader this week.

REFLECTORS ON TRUCKS

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to my question of July 30 about the fitting or application of reflectorized tape to railway trucks as an experimental measure?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The Government is mindful of the views of the Australian Railways Commissioners concerning the use of reflectorized material on the sides of railway vehicles. This was fully considered at the meeting of the Australian Transport Advisory Council last July, when it was decided that continuous investigations throughout Australia should be made to develop ways and means of overcoming the problem of accidents at level crossings. This included further investigations into the use of reflectorized material.

The Government considers that for many reasons, including current experience with the luminescent stripes on the front of suburban railcars which have to be removed and cleaned at frequent intervals, and also because a reflectorized strip could possibly be obscured by tarpaulins, the placing of reflective material, whether on new or old railway vehicles, would not be practicable.

The department is not unresponsive to the initiation of experiments which may lessen the level crossing hazard, and as an initial step certain freight vehicles have been painted yellow. In addition, departmental officers have given consideration to the possibility of mounting reflectorized indicators on the inside surfaces of level crossing wing fences with the object of providing the motorist proceeding from the opposite side of the crossing with a spasmodically interrupted reflection when a train is passing over the crossing. It is hoped that it will be possible to undertake experiments in this connection.

In addition, consideration is being given to painting waggon numbers with reflectorized or luminous paint. However, there is the legal liability of the Railways Commissioner to be considered in some cases—for example, where the effectiveness of reflectorized or luminous paint is reduced by dust accumulating on the sides of waggons. This is at present being thoroughly investigated. I assure honourable members that level crossing accidents are of great concern to the Government. Every possible step to reduce the frequency of these accidents will be taken.

SCIENTOLOGY

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I ask leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Chief Secretary.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I have recently received some letters from a group known as the Scientology Group, and I believe other honourable members have also received such letters. As the activities of this group have caused concern in South Australia, and as such concern was previously caused in another State, will the Chief Secretary state the Government's attitude on this matter?

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: This question was raised recently at the conference of Ministers of Health in Darwin, where concern was expressed that the practice of scientology had spread from Victoria to other States. Honourable members realize that Victoria took certain action in 1965 in regard to scientology.

Cabinet, which has been investigating it very thoroughly, decided this morning that a Bill should be drafted along the lines of the Victorian legislation. This Bill will soon be introduced, and at that time honourable members will be able to examine the question themselves.

CLEVE PROPERTY

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: Has the Minister of Agriculture a reply to the question I asked on July 30 regarding a property at Cleve that was bequeathed to the Agriculture Department?

The Hon. C. R. STORY: It is correct that a Mr. Sims bequeathed a very valuable property to the Agriculture Department. Before he made the bequest the Agriculture Department told Mr. Sims that it would have to use the property in the best way that could be devised and that the department was very grateful for his generous action. The honourable member's question related to the Government's plans for the property, particularly in regard to a research station. The Sims Bequest Farm at Cleve is at present being utilized by the Agriculture Department along the following lines: About 200 acres of land is cropped each year under a leasing agreement made with Mr. R. P. Leonard. The agreement provides for appropriate dressings of superphosphate for the crop, for the ploughing of firebreaks and for the preparation of an additional area for experimental purposes. The lessee is also required to grow an area of pure cereal seed if directed to do so by the department.

The grazing rights on the property have been leased by Mr. J. C. Leonard. The agreement sets a limit to the number of sheep to be carried and provides for the topdressing of 200 acres of pasture. A number of field experiments is conducted each year. These relate chiefly to the aspects of cereal variety and fertilizer. The above leasing agreements provide that the lessees shall maintain fences and be responsible for weed and vermin control. A small allocation of Government money has been made for refencing.

The Director of Agriculture has taken a keen interest in this matter and informs me that he does not favour the establishment at this stage of a further research centre in the area. Having regard to limitations of funds and personnel, it is considered that the basic need is to strengthen research staff at already established research centres and to provide better research facilities and farm equipment at these places. Obviously, a new centre would inevitably

lead to some dispersal of existing resources, to the prejudice of the effectiveness of the work at research centres as a whole. It would therefore seem that any additional funds which became available could more profitably be used in augmenting staff and facilities at established centres.

NORTH ADELAIDE SHUNTING

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to the question I asked on August 21 regarding a later start for shunting at the North Adelaide railway station?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The existing shunting arrangements at North Adelaide are carried out for a period of about 25 minutes commencing shortly after 4 a.m. Mondays to Fridays and have been in operation for many years. The current complaint is the first that has been reported.

There are several reasons for the timing of this work—namely, the necessity to place clients' loading in time for a 6 a.m. start, the desirability of minimizing obstruction to the North Adelaide level crossing when road traffic starts to move, the requirements of clients at other stations served by the same shunting movement, and the necessity to observe award conditions pertaining to hours of duty. It is regretted that the person concerned suffered inconvenience, but this is a natural corollary of living in industrial areas.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Will the Minister obtain for me the starting time of shunting in the North Adelaide yards during the last two months?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I understood my reply to indicate that the starting time was 4 a.m. Possibly the honourable member thinks that it may have varied slightly over the past two months from that specified time, which apparently is an instruction of the department. In view of his query, I will obtain a further report from the Railways Commissioner and bring it down as soon as possible.

RAILWAY PORTERS

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to the question I asked a fortnight ago regarding a case concerning a railway porter at the Virginia railway station?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: This incident involved the payment for some secondhand sleepers purchased by a resident of Two Wells. The railway employee concerned acted

correctly in the circumstances and it was established that he was subject to some unnecessary criticism from the customer concerned, with the result that he entered into an altercation with him.

It is maintained that the porter was subject to unjustified criticism, but unfortunately he entered into an altercation with the customer, something which he is instructed to avoid at all costs. In the circumstances, the porter was advised that whilst appreciating the conditions under which the incident occurred his attention was drawn to the relevant rule which states that an employee must not enter into altercation with the public whatever provocation may be given.

GAWLER BY-PASS

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to the question I asked on August 20 regarding the Gawler by-pass and the fatalities that have occurred thereon?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The imposition of a speed limit on the Gawler by-pass would not have a salutary effect on road accidents at either the Redbanks or the Gawler Belt intersection. Both these intersections, as with the other junctions along the by-pass, are controlled by "give way" signs. The majority of accidents which have occurred have resulted entirely from the entering motorist to the by-pass failing to give way to a vehicle on the by-pass as required by the Road Traffic Act. The signs and sight distances at each intersection are above average. The problem lies mainly in the education of the motorist as to the full meaning and obligation of the "give way" sign.

A recent radar study of speeds on the by-pass shows the average speed of motorists on the by-pass to be between 45 and 50 miles an hour. For a facility of this type, this speed is a reasonable operating speed, taking into account the limited number of intersections and no side activity from development.

The honourable member states that it is the Highways Department's practice not to impose a speed limit on a by-pass but, however, an exception has been made for the Barmera by-pass. The by-pass at Barmera is not a by-pass in the true sense as it was constructed to make a more direct route to Berri, using an existing subdivision route. When the route was used there were a limited number of premises abutting the road and, as limited

access was not imposed by the department, further development has been allowed to extend along the by-pass route.

Gawler by-pass, however, was constructed by using part of an existing road system and partly on a new route, some distance from the township of Gawler. The road was declared a limited access road by the department to prohibit development taking place, which would necessitate the imposition of a speed limit. The Highways Department is currently investigating the network of roads feeding on to the Gawler by-pass to see whether the problems associated with these intersections can be resolved by overpassing or improved channelling.

The imposition of a speed limit on the by-pass is not recommended as the average speed is already low and it is doubtful whether such a limit would have any effect on the type of accident which is occurring on the by-pass at these intersections.

CROWN LANDS ACT

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: On August 14 I asked the Minister of Agriculture, representing the Minister of Lands, when the Crown Lands Act would be amended to provide better tenure for land in unproclaimed townships. Has the Minister a reply?

The Hon. C. R. STORY: My colleague reports that it is hoped a Bill to amend the Crown Lands Act will be introduced during the present session.

ADELAIDE TO GAWLER RAILWAY (ALTERATION OF DRY CREEK TERMINUS) BILL

The Hon. C. M. HILL (Minister of Roads and Transport) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to provide for the removal of portion of the railway known as the "Branch to the Dry Creek", and for other purposes. Read a first time.

MOTOR VEHICLES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

ROAD MAINTENANCE (CONTRIBUTION) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

EVIDENCE (AFFIDAVITS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

DAIRY CATTLE IMPROVEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 28. Page 876.)

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN (Central No. 1): Having seriously considered the contents of this Bill, I am more than ever convinced that a little bull goes a long way. I very much doubt whether the Government has a mandate to introduce this legislation. It is not mentioned in the Government's policy speech; I can find no reference to it anywhere.

The main provision of the Bill appears in clause 2, which amends section 6 of the principal Act. Section 6 has two subsections, the second of which reads:

(2) If—

(a) after the thirty-first day of July in any year, any bull over the age of six months on the first day of the said month is unlicensed; or

(b) after the thirty-first day of January in any year, any bull over the age of six months on the first day of the said month is unlicensed, the owner shall suffer a certain penalty. In both the principal Act and this Bill the onus is on the owner of a bull to see that it is registered. He has six months in which to do it, whereas human beings have only one month in which to register a birth. I do not know why there should be this discrepancy between the time for the registration of a bull (six months) and that for the registration of a human birth (one month). The Bill strikes out subsection (2) of section 6, and similar phraseology is used in the Bill to that used in subsection (2) (a). Under the Bill there will be a new subsection (2):

If after the thirty-first day of July in any year any bull over the age of six months on the first day of that month is unlicensed, the owner of that bull shall be guilty of an offence against this Act and, on conviction, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding forty dollars.

If, on the first day after July 31 in any year a bull is not over the age of six months, there will be no onus on the owner to register it until the following year, whereas at present it is on a six-monthly basis. Under the principal Act, if a bull has not attained the age of six months and is not registered on July 31, it will become registered in January of the following year. The reason given by the Minister of Agriculture for this amendment is that only a few bulls have been thus registered. The Minister in his second reading explanation said:

This amendment has been recommended by the Advisory Committee for Dairy Improvement. Licence fees are credited to the Dairy Cattle Trust Fund and the fees derived from licences in respect of bulls over the age of six months on January 1 have been about \$100 annually. It is considered that this amount does not warrant the work required to be undertaken by members of the Police Force, departmental officers and dairymen.

I do not know whether this is an indication that the Agriculture Department's offices are understaffed and cannot cope with the amount of work involved, which, apparently, is negligible. I cannot say whether or not the \$100 annually is the only amount of money involved here. If it is, it means the registration of about 50 bulls a year. The Minister has now cut out one of their birthdays: instead of having two, the bulls will now have only one, which is unfair to the bulls.

The Hon. A. F. Kneebone: How do they get on in a leap year?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: The bull still gets its birthday in a leap year, but in future only one instead of two. If an expenditure of only \$100 annually is involved, I do not see where all the work attached to this licensing comes in, involving members of the Police Force, departmental officers and dairymen. The owner of the bull would fill in a form and send it in to the department together with the licence or registration fee; the bull would be duly registered with the department and the owner of the bull would be notified. I do not know whether it is wise to amend the Act in this way.

Clause 3 effects an amendment to section 10 of the principal Act by inserting "Subject to subsection (2) of this section" at the beginning of subsection (1), and clauses 4, 5, and 6 amend the Act by substituting decimal currency for the old currency. Clause 7 does the same thing in the schedule. The only clause that effects a material amendment is clause 2, with which I have already dealt. I support the second reading.

The Hon. L. R. HART (Midland): I support this small amending Bill, which seeks to remove an anomaly in the principal Act. We must appreciate that, when a bull is under six months old, it is actually not a bull at all: it is only a calf. Therefore, this is what some people may term "red tape". There is, of course, in Government much red tape, some of which is necessary, and some unnecessary. This Bill seeks only to remove some of the unnecessary red tape.

The principal Act has a very long history. Prior to 1921, when it was introduced, the late Mr. Peter Waite, who was a very generous benefactor to South Australia, made a gift of land to the State for educational purposes. Part of this land is now used by the Waite Agricultural Research Institute. To use the gift to the best advantage, the Government of the day appointed a fairly large and representative committee, which in turn appointed some subcommittees, one of which considered the question of improving South Australia's dairy stock. In taking this action the subcommittee was undoubtedly influenced by a remark of the then Governor of South Australia, Sir Archibald Weigall, who himself was a keen judge of stock and a prominent breeder of the Lincoln Red breed of cattle. During his travels around the State Sir Archibald became perturbed at the poor quality of our dairy cattle, and on one occasion he referred to them as "three-cornered cattle".

The subcommittee believed that an improvement in South Australia's dairy stock could be effected only by using pure-bred bulls of approved milking strains. The first essential was to get rid of the mongrel bull being used at that time, which was often referred to as a scrub bull. The subcommittee recommended licensing all bulls and that the licence fees should be paid into a fund to be known as the dairy cattle fund. The Commonwealth Government agreed to pay 25 per cent of the total cost of herd testing in this State, provided the contribution did not exceed \$14,688. At present the Commonwealth Government is paying a flat rate of \$20,000 into this fund. Since 1964 the State Government has contributed half the remainder of the cost of herd testing and the dairymen have contributed the other half.

A subsidy on the purchase price of bulls is paid from the fund, which also pays for herd testing and for the salaries connected therewith. The fund also makes a small contribution to the prize money paid by the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society Incorporated. The subsidy on bulls paid from this fund at present is 30 per cent of the purchase price of a bull, provided the subsidy does not exceed \$100. Nowadays 80 to 100 bulls are purchased annually under this scheme. As herds have improved, more bulls have become eligible for the subsidy. Consequently, it has been necessary from time to time to increase the standards required for a bull to qualify for a subsidy.

A committee known as the Dairy Herd Improvement Committee advises the Minister on all matters relating to dairy herd improvement and productivity. The committee consists of the Director of Agriculture, Mr. Marshall Irving, the Chief Dairy Officer, three representatives of the dairy farmers and two representatives of the stud breeders. To qualify for the subsidy a bull must be pure bred and eligible for inclusion in an appropriate herd book, and no bull can qualify for subsidy unless he is progeny of officially tested stock with satisfactory performance records according to fixed standards.

The present requirement is that both the dam of the bull and the dam of the sire shall have, over a period of three successive lactations, produced an aggregate of 1,180 lb. of butterfat as two-year-olds, 1,300 lb. as three-year-olds, 1,385 lb. as four-year-olds and 1,500 lb. as mature cows. In addition, in each of these lactations they must measure up to certain minimum standards. The present standards laid down for the sale of whole milk are 3.5 per cent of butterfat and 8.5 per cent of solids, not fat. These standards are laid down by the Public Health Department under the Health Act. Fats represent the amount of butter, whereas solids are composed of casein, albumen, lactose (or milk sugar) and the minerals calcium and phosphorus as well as water-soluble vitamins. These are valuable body building constituents and most important in the diet.

With the introduction of artificial insemination, breeding from cattle of a high butterfat standard becomes increasingly important, because a bull may sire 20,000 to 30,000 calves during his lifetime. In fact, some calves may be sired after the bull has died because, with artificial insemination, there is a means of storing the semen for several years. So, in the dairying industry today we cannot afford to produce water at the expense of solids, because 80 per cent of the milk is diverted into manufacture that is dependent on butterfat and non-fat solids content. The economic stability of the industry depends on the solids content of milk.

Over the years there have been several amendments to the principal Act. In 1940 it was amended to exempt the payment of fees for bulls of beef breeds registered in herd books, provided they were not used in dairy herds. Prior to 1940 all bulls had to be registered, whereas the benefits to be derived from the Act were available only in respect of dairy cattle. So, bulls used exclusively for

beef breeding purposes were exempted. However, owners of some beef bulls used in the dairying industry were still required to pay the licence fees.

In 1955 the Act was further amended to increase the licence fees to bring them into line with money values at that time. Prior to 1955 the fees had been 50c for calves under the age of six months and \$1 for bulls over that age, and since then they have been \$1 for calves under the age of six months and \$2 for bulls over that age. In 1960 there was a further amendment, exempting bulls not used in dairy herds from the herd book requirements. Pursuant to the 1940 amendment, it was necessary for a bull to be registered in a herd book and the owner of any bull so registered, or eligible for such registration, was exempted from the payment of a fee. However, many breeders of beef cattle were not registered in a herd book, and a fee was still payable for these cattle, and the 1960 amendment cancelled the liability for that fee.

The success of the full subsidy scheme, together with herd testing, is reflected in the increased productivity of dairy herds in South Australia. The estimated average of the untested dairy cattle in this State at present is about 250 lb. of butterfat, with a production of 500 gallons of milk annually. As low as this may seem, it is still above the Commonwealth average. However, the average production for cows under official tests is 311 lb. of butterfat, which is 61 lb. above the production of those not under official tests. These produce 685 gallons of milk annually, which is 185 gallons above the production of those not under official tests. When this is compared with the production of the best cows in the herds, the average does not come out in a very good light. Indeed, the best cows under official tests produce about 1,000 lb. of butterfat annually, and the same cows produce about 2,200 gallons of milk annually. We realize that there is still a long way to go to bring our average up to the best production.

Any improvement that has been effected by the introduction of this scheme should not be

considered in isolation, because other factors have also influenced the increased productivity of the dairy herds in South Australia. Admittedly, the bull subsidy was one factor, especially the introduction of bulls to herds with approved standard tests, and the elimination of the scrub bull. Herd testing has been a great factor, because it enables the producer to know exactly the productivity of his cows. Of course, improved pastures and better feeding are other factors. The scientific feeding of dairy cows has been a big factor in the increase in production. It is possible that today there are fewer side-line dairymen than there have been previously. On the other hand, there are now more specialists in the industry—people whose sole living is derived from dairy farming. These people apply the scientific methods available to them.

The Health Department has also made a contribution, by requiring that certain hygiene standards be maintained. This has had the effect of eliminating disease from dairy herds in this State. All these factors have contributed to the high productivity of the dairying industry. However, as I have said previously, there is still a long way to go, and it is only by the increased use of high-producing animals that we shall be able to lift our average to somewhere near the present test results obtained from the better herds. Indeed, our averages are still below the best averages that are obtained overseas.

As we are considering this amendment to the Act, I thought it would interest members to know a little of the background of this legislation. The Hon. Mr. Bevan raised two or three points, but I am not sure whether he was quite serious or whether he was being facetious, as he often is. Until I hear the further argument on this Bill, I am prepared to support the second reading.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 3.8 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, September 4, at 2.15 p.m.