

COMMERCIAL EGG PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

CENTRAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the Special Meeting of all Branches of the C.E.P.A., held at the R.S.L. Hall, Kangaroo Flat on Monday March 2nd, 1981.

Chairman D. Oakes opened the meeting and welcomed 36 members present.

An apology was received from Mr. Bill Ebery.

CORRESPONDENCE * (1) letter from V.E.B. re filler costs.
(2) Circular from V.E.B. on changes in procedure for collecting Board levy.
(3) V.E.B. re down grading of "B" class eggs by further 20 cents per dozen.

President welcomed A. Hudson former member of V.E.B. AND R. Guy, manager of Crystal Egg Co.

Mr. R. Guy addressed the meeting, he said he had spent some hours with the Board last Friday, he said the changes over the past 6 months were designed to make the user of a service pay for that service. Equalisation payments were made from the pool which is 10.2 cents per dozen, this covered cartage etc., now this pool is to be replaced.

Grading at 7 cents per dozen is paid direct to the grading floor. This was paid on floors with bigger turnovers receiving less than smaller floors per dozen, it is now paid on consignments, Crystal Egg Co., have approximately 412 per week. Nearly half of these are in the 15 dozen to 60 dozen receivals.

Producers will now pay consignment fee of \$2.00.

There is no way country floors can compete with Melbourne floors, the selling commission to grading floors is now gone.

He said it was the Board's intention to reduce the pool even more, country produced eggs sent to Melbourne must pay cartage, this will benefit the large Melbourne farms, approx. cost 3 cents per dozen from Bendigo.

But this is not to be implemented yet thanks to Mr. Tom Austin.

Intake at the floor last week was 129,000 dozen, at Christmas 159,000 dozen, having lost 2 large farms, Fantasy and Rice's, this could mean an intake of less than 7 million dozen per annum.

A. Hudson suggested that we ask for an immediate deputation with the Minister of Agriculture along with local parliamentarians - pointing out that the Board is proposing major policy, operational and administrative changes in areas still under investigation by the Committee of Inquiry, and before the Committee has reported to Parliament.

The proposals are fundamentally opposed to the principle of the Marketing of Products Act, under which the Board should operate, and which was established primarily to ensure equity among all producers.

The proposals will materially benefit only one section of the industry - and seriously disadvantage other sections, particularly those in decentralised regions, which do not have representation on the Board.

Therefore requesting that the Minister should instruct the Board to withhold any further action on the proposals until:

- (a) The Committee of Inquiry has reported to Parliament,
- (b) He has established that the Board is acting within the principles of the Act.

He stated that there is a continuing series of problems, these issues have be confronting producers for years. This Board is out to dismantle orderly marketing in Victoria. We must request that all Board members should be present at deputations, this should be stressed to the Minister. This is a further move to economically disadvantage decentralised egg production, grading, packing and marketing.

The proposal to allow P.A.'s to supply distributors is particularly serious. Until now, large retailers of eggs have preferred to buy in bulk from one source - grading floors. This is the most direct and most economical method.

If distributors are to be allowed to develop in the middle between the P.A., grading floor and the retailer, industry costs must rise.

In recent years the Board has been able to contain distribution costs by direct delivery and eliminating distributors.

To counter the anti-decentralisation moves, country section of the industry must work together, apply maximum political pressure backed by a media campaign, and ensure that grading floors maintain and where possible expand their outlets through the big retailers.

Mr. Hudson suggested that we plan for the worst and possibly form a company with Crystal Egg Co., and market our eggs under a country brand name. He also suggested we could engage Don Bain as Marketing consultant.

Suggestions for Executive when they meet with the Board.

Each area of producers take political action with government members in their area.

Push the National Party with view to possible coalition government in the future, also possible Federal action.

Country Producers penalised, "B" class eggs in the winter months are generally good quality.

The Board's pressure will force the small producers to throw in their quota, thus largers producers will obtain these for nothing.

These changes could force small producers to sell eggs on the black.

Country producers pay extra for a lot of their feed compared to city producers.

Moved R. Broadbent, seconded R. Robins that we seek a deputation to Mr. Austin, Minister for Agriculture and ask him to put the brakes on these changes, this deputation to be as soon as possible. Carried.

A. Broadbent suggested that we approach the National Party and ask if they will make press statements in support of our policies and also decentralisation.

It was also suggested that we put together a statement of facts explaining our policy for the local members.

We must point out that it is the Victorian Egg Marketing Board not the Keysborough Marketing Board.

We should try to work out the number of people dependant on poultry farms in country areas.

A. Broadbent, R. Broadbent and J. Scott were nominated to attend a public meeting in Bendigo next week when Ian Smith will talk on small businesses.

Meeting closed at 11.50 p.m.

Chairman,

Date.