



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

**EGG INDUSTRY SERVICE
PROVISION BILL 2002**

**EGG INDUSTRY SERVICE
PROVISION (TRANSITIONAL AND
CONSEQUENTIAL PROVISIONS) BILL 2002**

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Thursday, 19 September 2002

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Thursday, 19 September 2002
Page 6787
Questioner
Speaker Katter, Bob, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (10.40 am)—I would like to speak to the short title of the Egg Industry Service Provision Bill 2002. The title of the bill indicates a change to a different marketing arrangement. What is happening here is being driven by the big egg producers. Prior to deregulation there were some 1,400 egg producers in Australia; there are now fewer than 300. Six hundred requests for information were sent out, and fewer than 300 were returned, indicating that those other people had left the industry. Of those who did reply, some 30 or 40 indicated that they would soon be leaving the industry. The number of egg producers in the Atherton Tableland area has gone from about a dozen to about three at present.

We are deeply disappointed with the performance of governments over the last 12 years since deregulation. The minister has introduced a bill changing everything around. We need to readdress deregulation, and look at reintroducing some sort of regulatory marketing arrangements. The net outcome of the deregulation was a diminution in incomes for farmers, from around \$1.80 net prior to deregulation to under \$1 now. This bill does not address any of these problems. Whilst I am not going to ask for a division on this issue, it is right and proper that I should express extreme displeasure at government inaction over this situation. Deregulation was supposed to deliver to consumers, but, following deregulation, the price of eggs has soared—I do not have the exact figures at my disposal—over 300 per cent.

Let us look at the outcome from deregulation: 1,000 Australian family businesses have gone broke and vanished off the planet, the consumer is paying 300 per cent more for the product and the farmer is getting less than half of what he was getting some 12 years ago, in which time the CPI has gone up about 30 per cent. What a wonderful outcome for deregulation and for our economic rationalist friends who run the current government and ran the last government of Australia! The short title to this bill, and the state of the egg industry, stand as a monument to the disastrous failure of the policy of deregulation in this country. Would to heaven we had people like McEwen and Anthony back in the saddle in this place.

Bill agreed to.

Ordered that the bill be reported to the House without amendment.