**DOG FENCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1982**

**Legislative Council, 14 December 1982, pages 84-5**

Second reading

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

The Hon. B.A. CHATTERTON (Minister of Agriculture):

I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time. The objectives of this Bill are:

To recognise the change in name of 'Stockowners Association of South Australia' to 'United Farmers and Stockowners of South Australia Incorporated'. The organisation nominates two members for appointment to the Dog Fence Board.

To repeal section 8, which refers to retirement procedures applicable to the first members of the Dog Fence Board, constituted in 1946. The section no longer applies to board appointments which are for a set term of four years.

To increase the frequency of inspection patrols by fence owners. Section 22 (1) (b) requires that the fence be inspected at 'proper intervals'. The proposed amendment is more specific in stating inspections must be made at 'intervals of not more than 14 days'.

To clarify the responsibilities of fence owners regarding the destruction of wild dogs in the vicinity of the dog fence.

Section 22 (1) (c) states the owner of any part of the dog fence shall take all reasonable steps to destroy all wild dogs in the vicinity of the dog fence. The proposed amendment provides that the owner shall destroy dogs 'by shooting or trapping the dogs, or by laying poisoned baits for them'.

To increase the maximum amount of maintenance subsidy payable by the board from the present $45 per kilometre to $225 per kilometre. The proposed amendment is related to the amendment of section 25 (3) increasing the maximum rate from 20 cents per square kilometre to one dollar per square kilometre. The rates collected when added to the Government subsidy represent the board's income, and some 85 per cent of these moneys are paid directly to fence owners as a maintenance subsidy.

Section 25 (2) empowers the board to declare a rate upon ratable land without reference to an approval by the Minister. Section 31 (a) provides for a Government subsidy equivalent to a rate of $1 for every $1 of the rates declared by the board for that financial year. The amendment to section 25 will serve to have the Minister approve the rate set by the board, and hence exert control of the funds to be provided by Government subsidy.

To increase the maximum rate the board may declare with the approval of the Minister from the present 20 cents per square kilometre to $1 per square kilometre.

Currently the board is declaring the maximum rate of 20 cents per square kilometre, returning approximately $45 000 per annum from landholders. This rate income attracts a $1 for $1 subsidy from Government, making the total approximately $90 000 per annum. Payments to fence owners currently paid is $35 per kilometre of fence owned absorbing approximately $77 000 of the total funds.

The board has foreshadowed an increase in rates from 20 cents to 55 cents per square kilometre, returning approximately $132 750 from rates, a corresponding contribution from Government subsidy would produce an income of $265 500. On that basis, subsidy to fence owners would increase to approximately $100 per kilometre of fence owned.

To increase from 65 hectares to 100 hectares the minimum area ratable by a Local Dog Fence Board. Many areas between 65 hectares and 100 hectares are not used to depasture sheep. The rate paid by small landholders does not cover the cost of administration.

To increase the maximum rate a Local Dog Fence Board may declare from $1.50 to $3 per square kilometre. The amendment recognises the need for local boards to increase their incomes to maintain their fence in sound dog proof conditions. Rates presently declared by local boards range from 60 cents per square kilometre to $1.50 per square kilometre. I seek leave to have the detailed explanation of the clauses inserted in Hansard without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Explanation of Clauses

Clauses 1 and 2 are formal. Clause 3 amends section 6 of the principal Act. The amendment made by paragraph (a) is necessary because of the change in name of the Stock-owners Association of South Australia since the original enactment of the principal Act. Paragraph (b) removes a passage from section 6 (2) which had transitional importance at the commencement of the principal Act but is no longer relevant. Clause 4 repeals section 8 of the principal Act. Once again this provision is transitional in its effect and is now of no relevance. Clause 5 amends section 22 of the Principal Act. Paragraph (a) makes clear that inspections of the dog fence must take place at least every 14 days. Paragraph (b) amends subsection (1) (c) so that it is clear what methods must be used to destroy dogs.

Clause 6 makes an amendment to section 24 (1) of the principal Act which will enable the Dog Fence Board to pay different amounts to different owners of sections of the fence to reflect differences in time and money that must be expended by each in the maintenance of the fence. Additional payments are required in cases of serious damage to the fence by fire or flood. The amendment also increases the maximum sum that may be paid to a realistic level. Clause 7 amends section 25 of the principal Act. Paragraph (a) replaces subsection (2) so that the approval of the Minister will, in the future, be required before a rate is declared. Paragraph (b) increases the maximum amount of the rate that may be levied. Clause 8 makes amendments to section 26 of the principal Act which increases the minimum size of separate holdings for the purpose of the declaration of a special rate. The maximum rate per square kilometre is increased to $3. Clause 9 amends section 42 of the principal Act by increasing penalties prescribed by that section to more realistic levels.

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