**VERMIN ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 1926**

**House of Assembly, 28 October 1926, pages 1145-6**

Second reading

**The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS Hon T. Butterfield)—**The report states that Division IX. of Part III. of the Vermin Act, 1914 gives power to a vermin board constituted under the Act to declare a rate for the purpose of the Act. Section 124 of the principal Act, as amended by section 4 of the Vermin Act Further Amendment Act, 1922, provides that the rate shall not exceed 7s. 6d. on each full quarter of a square mile of the ratable property within the district. The Vermin Districts Association has requested the Government to increase the maximum rate imposable under the Act from 7s. 6d. to 10s. for each full quarter of a square mile. The Association points out that, owing to the high cost of the materials required for fencing, and the high rates ruling for labor for the erection of fences and cartage of material, the limit of the rate at present allowed under the Act is insufficient, particularly where from the nature of the country it is necessary to enclose small areas, which entails a relatively great cost per square mile. Clause 2, therefore, amends section 124 of the principal Act and increases the maximum rate imposable from 7s. 6d. to 10s. for each full quarter of a square mile. This amendment is recommended by the Pastoral Board. At present the limit of the rate that can be imposed on pastoral land for the purpose of erecting vermin fencing is 30s. a square mile. That was found to impose restrictions on people desiring to fence, because owing to the cost of fencing going up it was found difficult on many occasions to have the district agreed to by the Government. In view of the price of wool and sheep to-day there is no shadow of doubt but what it is quite sound to agree to let pastoralists who desire the benefits of vermin fencing have this amendment.

Mr. Young—Has it been brought in at the request of pastoralists ?

The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS ~-Yes; the Stockowners’ Association and pastoralists generally desire it. Under Division X. of Part III. of the principal Act the State Bank is empowered to make advances to a vermin board for the purpose of defraying the cost of the erection and maintenance of vermin fences proposed to be erected by the board. These advances are repayable in 20 equal annual instalments, together with simple interest on the balance for the time being unpaid at the fixed rate. Under this system the payment for the first few years are heavy. For instance, during the first year of the term of the loan the board is called upon to pay one-twentieth of the loan, that is, 5 per cent, and interest at the fixed rate. If the interest is fixed at 6 per cent, it follows that during the first year the board must pay £11 for every £100 advanced. It is, of course, during the first few years that the expenses of settlers in a vermin district are necessarily heavy, and at that time they are not so well prepared to meet the rates which must be imposed by the board to repay an advance made by the State Bank as in later years when they are well established. The heaviest payments come in the initial years, when frequently they are not able to make any use at all of the fencing. After a fence is erected, the wild dogs have to be got out before they can stock the country. It is a heavy obligation in the initial years, so we have agreed after discussion with them to bring in this amendment, which will allow an equal amount to be paid over the whole 20 years, in order to give them some relief in the earlier stages. Clauses 3 and 4 therefore comply with a request of the Vermin Districts Association, and a recommendation of the Pastoral Board and the State Bank, and provide that in the cases of loans made by the State Bank to vermin boards after the passing of this Bill, the loans shall be repayable by 20 equal instalments of principal and interest spread over the whole term of the loan. The effect of these provisions will be that the instalments of principal and interest upon any loan under Division X of Part III. of the principal Act will be lighter in the first few years of the loan than they now are, with a corresponding increase upon the present instalments during the last years of the term of the loan. The Bill has the approval of the Stockowners’ Association and pastoralists generally, and there should be no hesitation whatever in agreeing to it, particularly as within the next few days I will be introducing here a resolution in respect to another vermin district, and it will be of considerable benefit to those who are applying under that resolution to have a district declared, because under present conditions, under the rate laid down, in order to get the benefits of the Act those concerned have to pay a very big proportion of the first cost of the fence itself. I move the second reading.

L. Mr. BUTLER secured the adjournment of the debate until November 2.