**THE VERMIN ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 1913**

**Legislative Council, 14 August 1913, page 119**

Second reading

**The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS** said the Bill was for the pur­pose of easing the working of the adminis­trative machinery of the Vermin Acts, and for providing one or two amend­ments of importance, with a view to leading up to a consolidating measure, which lie would probably submit to the House next session. The Bill also ex­tended the principle of these Acts to cer­tain lands previously exempted, namely, timbered strips in the Pinnaroo district, comprising about 9,000 acres in all, set apart as breakwind reserves in the Pinnaroo railway district. That extension was provided for in clauses 13, i4, and 15 of the Bill. The provision was made at the request of the local district council, who were in the position that whilst ad- joininsr owners were responsible for ver­min on the three-chain roads in that dis­trict, they were not responsible under the Vermin Acts for the small strips very wisely reserved as wind-breaks, the re­sult being that the liability for the tim­bered strips fell upon the district coun­cil, with some assistance from the Go­vernment. The council put it strongly that the responsibility should be thrown upon the adjoining owners, and he thought the case in respect to the timbered strips was rather stronger than that in- regard to the three-chain roads, because every farm bounded by a strip of timber was more valuable on that account. Clauses 3 and 4 provided for two minor amend­ments of the principal Act, by which the simultaneous destruction months would be the first four, instead of the first three, months of the year, and the notice to destroy vermin, where the vermin had not been destroyed during the vermin de­struction months, might specify periods of varying length for particular districts, within which vermin were to be destroyed after notice, instead of the present uni­form period. That would be effected by empowering the Minister to prescribe the lengths of time for various localities. That provision was sought for the local governing bodies in the South-East, who felt that the present notice was alto­gether too long, as when it had expired and the council had taken action the time had gone by for the destruction of rabbits. They sought to have the length of time very much shortened, but the Government pointed out there were other districts very much more scat­tered, where the postal facilities were not so great, and that in those cases longer time would be necessary. They then fell in with the idea that the best way would be tp have varying periods in the different districts. Clause 5 made provision, in a case where a Vermin Board began to contribute to the cost of a fence already erected, for the payment of the interest actually charged on the loan, instead of a fixed rate of 4 per cent., as was now required. This was a subsidiary amendment of a similar nature to those made by last year’s Act. Under clause 6 a Vermin Board might pay for the destruction of vermin outside, as well as within, its district. A board re­quired this power for the protection of its own district, as sometimes the expen­diture of a small sum just outside a board’s boundary would save a large expenditure inside its district. Clause 7 provided a summary method for the recovery of amounts due to the Government by mem­bers of a vermin trust. The whole amount might be claimed from any one member, as the members were jointly or severally liable, but if one paid the whole he might, under the common law doctrine of con­tribution, recover a proportion from each of his fellow members. A re-enactment, with amendments, of sections159 and 160 of the principal Act was effected by clause 8. The object was to enable the Minister, when he erected a fence under the autho­rity of section 1'59, to collect the annual instalments of the cost in the form of a rate imposed on the land of the persons benefited. That was the most convenient mode of collection. He might appoint a committee of management to collect the rate, to provide for the maintenance and supervision of the fence, and to enforce the destruction of vermin within the fenced area. Clause 9 enabled the Com­missioner to delegate to a district council and other authorities the powers given him by section 162 of the principal Act to erect vermin-proof fences across roads. Clause 11 enabled a Vermin Board to ob­tain a loan to buy wire netting to be used for fences which might not be, strictly speaking, vermin-proof fences (e.g., to place round growing crops). Section 4 of the Act of 1911, which was amended by this clause, limited the power to loans for “vermin-proof fencing.” Clause 12 was to overcome a defect in section 24 of the Act of 1911, which arose out of the use of the term "any land,” and the limited meaning given to that term by the definition section of the prin­cipal Act which excludes “Crown lands.” Hon. members would see there were seve­ral other amendments of the existing law, but these were chiefly related to ma­chinery. The object of the Bill was to consolidate all the existing legislation re­lating to vermin—a policy with which he was sure every member of the House was in accord.

On the motion of Mr. VAUGHAN the debate was adjourned till Tuesday next.