**ANIMALS AND BIRDS PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1958**

**House of Assembly, 13 November 1958, pages 1725-6**

Second reading

**The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Minister of Agriculture**), having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1919-1938. Read a first time.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN—I move— *That this Bill be now read a second time.*

I regret that I have not been able to provide members with copies of my second reading explanation, but I wanted to get this Bill explained today so that it could be considered next week. I thank members for their courtesy in this matter. Since the opening of a channel between Lake Bonney, in the South-East, and the sea, the level of the lake has dropped by several feet. Some areas of land that were formerly islands are now connected with the mainland. One of these islands is a traditional nesting place for ibis. An inspection was recently made by the Chief Inspector of Fisheries and Game following on inquiries made in this House by the member for Millicent (Mr. Corcoran). The report of the Chief Inspector is as follows:—

Though the three islands at the northern end of the lake have been declared a bird sanctuary, it is only on the outermost island that the ibis nests. Two species are present—the strawnecked and the white. The strawnecked ibis is the more plentiful, outnumbering the white by probably 1,000 to one. Many thousands of ibis were present when we walked across to the island, although there is a constant coming and going of birds. They depart in small numbers of two to five birds all the day, but at intervals 100 or more (which have collected on a sand spit running southwards from the island) will rise and circle up and up above the island, eventually taking off for distant fields. Birds are constantly returning to the island in flocks of up to 100 or more.

The birds are breeding now, so we searched for signs of vandalism, but though the broken eggshells were common, each appeared to have resulted from the hatching of a chick. The nests littered the ground and were built on fallen trees as well as on those standing. In many cases no attempt had been made to build a nest other than to form a depression in the ground. Eggs were plentiful. So, too, were chickens in various stages of development from wet newly borns to fully fledged striplings not yet able to fly. The adults often stood together. Apparently pecking of each other is not adopted by this species.

The waters of the lake have drained away from the island on the northern side except for a shallow wide trickle coming in from a drain nearby. The mud near the old shore lines is deep and too treacherous to walk on except near the island. It is drying out quickly so that it will soon be quite easy to get to the island dry shod. Today rubber knee boots are required because of the sloshy mud and the shallow drainage waters.

I fear that the ibis, who are now busy rearing their young, will shun the locality eventually, not so much because of foxes, but because of the change due to the lack of water. Their isolated island is no longer an island. Man’s visits to the area will also cause disturbances to their one-time quiet. I therefore consider that a fence, as suggested by Mr. Corcoran, M.P., would be useless.

This is not a criticism of the suggestion made by Mr. Corcoran that this be done as an interim matter; the Chief Inspector prefers this Bill as a further modification. The report continues:—

Unless the Government can see its way clear to dig a wide moat around the northern portion of the “island,” thus making the one-time island an island again, I recommend that it be made an offence for any unauthorized person to go on the area now used as a breeding ground. This prohibition could not be enforced under any of the provisions of the Animals and Birds Protection Act.

After examining this matter, the Government decided to have a Bill drafted to cover it. The Parliamentary Draftsman has reported on the Bill as follows:—

This Bill is for the purpose of providing more adequate protection for the ibis, which live on a piece of land formerly an island in Lake Bonney, but now connected with the

shore. This land is a closed area within the meaning of the Animals and Birds Protection Act; that is to say, the birds therein are wholly protected. But it is not an offence for the general public to trespass on this land. The Bill provides that the Governor may declare the whole or any part of a closed area under the Animals and Birds Protection Act to be a prohibited area. While any area is a prohibited area within the meaning of any such proclamation, it will be an offence to enter or remain on it except with the permission of the Minister, in the case of Crown lands, or of the occupier in the case of other lands.

This Bill will give power to prohibit entry to closed areas—that is, areas closed under this Act.

Mr. CORCORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.