**RABBIT BILL 1875**

**Legislative Assembly, 5 October 1875, page 1273-4**

Second reading

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. Morgan) said this Bill had been introduced on the representation of certain farmers at Kapunda that in consequence of the rabbit nuisance it was almost impossible to gather their crops. On large runs it did not much matter how many rabbits there were; but to persons only possessing 200 or 300 acres of land it was a most serious matter to find a whole year's labour and produce destroyed by these irresponsible animals. The subject had received a good deal of attention some years back in Tasmania, and an Act had been passed there on the subject, and the present Bill was the copy of that Act, with this exception, that whereas in Tasmania they had Rabbit Boards or Trusts, here the work would be done by the District Councils, and would cost the Government nothing, as the expense of carrying out the measure would be borne by local rates. He moved the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. W. DUFFIELD did not understand why the interpretation clause enacted that a man must have 80 acres of land to be considered a landholder. He thought, too, that 14 days would not be long enough to enable persons to clear their district of rabbits. He offered a reward for all killed in his district, and he knew the operation took more than 14 days.(Laughter.) He would support the second reading of the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon, W. Morgan), in reply, said the limitation in the interpretation clause as to landholder was meant to govern the 3rd clause, which said such persons might petition the Governor to proclaim a rabbit district. The 14 days would have to be read in a liberal spirit, and be taken to mean the time a man would have in which to commence the operation of clearing the land of rabbits.

The Bill was then read a second time. In Committee.

The preamble was postponed.

Clause 1. Interpretation.

The Hon. W. DUFFIELD wished to know who would destroy the rabbits on the land not included in the Act. The exempted land was the great home of rabbits, and if rabbits were not destroyed there as elsewhere the Bill would be inoperative. He thought the exempted lands should be rated.

Sir H. AYERS agreed. Why should there be such a definition? Why should there be such exemptions?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. Morgan) said it was according to precedent. In the districts most pestered with rabbits there were very few reserves. (No, no.) Then the District Councils ought to be ready to pay the small additional cost of employing a male to destroy the rabbits on these lands.

The Hon. W. DUFFIELD said that in these districts there were lands for miles in length unoccupied.

The Hon. T. ENGLISH thought Government property ought to be included, and he hoped the exceptions would be struck out.

The Hon. A. HAY said according to his reading of the Bill all the property within the district would be rated,

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. Morgan) took it that landowners meant the persons in a position to petition the Government, and not mere householders. He would ask to have the clause postponed.

The Hon. W. STORRIE thought a leaseholder under the Council of Education would not be rated for rabbit destruction under this Bill.

Sir H. AYERS saw that that would be the effect of the Bill, and considered that it should be amended.

The Hon. J. CROZIER thought there was a great deal of force in the Hon. H Ayer's remarks, and that it would be quite unfair to rate householders for the destruction of rabbits.

The Hon. T. HOGARTH did not agree with the Hon. W. Duffield's remarks, and thought that householders might have gardens which could be destroyed by rabbits, and therefore that they should pay for the destruction of the rabbits.

The clause was postponed.

Clause 2 was passed as printed.

The heading of "Part I." was verbally amended.

Clause 3. Rabbit districts to be proclaimed within the limits of District Councils.

The amendment was agreed to. and the clause passed as amended.

Clause 4 was passed as printed.

Clauses. If rabbits not destroyed after notice land may be entered.

Sir H. AYERS said that this clause would act very injuriously in the case of large estates where for years people had been engaged doing their best to destroy the rabbits. It would also prevent persons from taking action, because they would say that they need not spend money if the District Council would do it for them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. Morgan) moved that the clause be postponed.

Carried.

Clause 6. Persons authorized may enter upon land to search for rabbits.

Sir H. AYERS moved to strike out the words “ without notice” after the word “ district” in the third line of the clause.

The amendment was carried.

The Hon. W. DUFFIELD moved to insert instead of the words struck out “after 24 hours’ notice shall have been given.”

The amendment was carried.

The Hon. W. STORRIE moved to insert after the words "thereof” in the 19th line the words “ not being within another rabbit district.” This would prevent the authorities of two districts clashing.

The amendment was carried, and the clause as amended passed. *\* >’■*

The Council resumed, progress was reported, and leave given to sit again on Thursday next.