**WILD DOGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1970**

**Legislative Assembly, 12 August 1979, pages 677-8**

Second reading

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works):** I move:

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

It is necessary to restore to solvency the fund constituted under the Wild Dogs Act. Following repeated submissions dating back to 1955 received from producer organizations requesting an increase in the wild dog bounty payments, the Minister of Lands directed the Pastoral Board to convene a conference to consider this particular aspect of dingo control and at the same time to inquire into dingo control measures operating in other States, which are confronted with this common problem.

Accordingly, invitations were extended to the appropriate authorities in the various States to meet in Adelaide to consider the question of increasing the bounty payments for wild dog scalps and for discussion of wild dog control measures in each State. The conference duly took place in May, 1969. It was resolved at the conference that the bounty rate on a wild dog scalp should be increased to $6. The Pastoral Board, after due consideration, recommended on June 17, 1969, that effect be given to the resolution passed at the conference that the then bounty payment of $2 for the scalp of a wild dog be increased to $6. The notice increasing the bounty payment from $2 to $6 as from September 1, 1969, was published in the *Gazette* on August 14, 1969.

In making this recommendation the board was influenced by the following factors:

1. The bounty payment was last upgraded in 1948 to the figure of $2. Since that time costs of killing wild dogs have risen steeply and the $2 bounty payment provided insufficient incentive to interest people in wild dog destruction. No professional dogger was operating in South Australia. It may be pointed out that for the same period the payment made to owners of the dog fence to assist them in maintaining the fence in dog-proof condition had been increased from $12 a mile to $35 a mile.
2. The Stockowners Association of South Australia and the Vermin Districts Association, the two producer organizations whose members are most directly concerned with the dingo problem, strongly advocated and supported an increase in the bounty payment to $6. Both associations fully appreciated that such an increase would also involve their ratable members in the payment of additional wild dog rates. In fact their contributions were trebled with the rise in bounty payment from $2 to $6.
3. Reports have been received by the board of unprecedented calf losses in the Far Northern cattle areas caused by dingo activity. These reports were confirmed by the pastoral inspectors and the board’s investigations. It was evident that urgent measures had to be taken to curb the rising dingo activity if cattle- breeding programmes were to survive, particularly in the Far North of the State. Also, it was obvious that the build-up in the dingo population would place a dangerous pressure on the dog fence, which is now the only functional barrier between the sheep population of the State and the dingo-breeding areas outside the fence. It was considered that the most expeditious manner of attaining this object was to increase the bounty payment.
4. The Wild Dogs Fund as at June 30, 1969, was in a healthy position, having a credit balance of $46,000, which, with rates and subsidy to be paid for the year 1969-70 totaling about $28,000, would provide for the payment of about 12,000 scalps at $6 each. Despite reports of increased dingo activity, it was not expected that this figure would be exceeded in the light of bounty payments made over the preceding 10 years. During that period scalps were submitted at an average rate of less than 4,000 a year. In fact, however, 19,490 scalps were submitted, requiring a total bounty pay-out of $111,060 representing 1,470 scalps at $2 each and 18,020 at $6. After borrowing from the Treasury $8,000 (the maximum advance permitted under the Wild Dogs Act) the Wild Dogs Fund at June 30, 1970, was $39,200 in debt.

In order to alleviate these financial problems for the year 1970-71, the bounty pay­ment has been reduced from $6 to $4 for the scalp of a fully grown wild dog, and from $6 to $1 for the scalp of a wild dog which is not fully grown. Also, the rate a square mile has been increased from 10c to 15c, the maximum rate permitted by the Act, which will provide an additional $8,000 in revenue. These measures, however, will be inadequate to restore the fund to solvency if, as may reasonably be expected, 12,000 scalps are submitted during the 1970-71 financial year in the ratio of 10,000 fully grown dogs at $4 and 2,000 pups at $1.

On the above hypothesis there will be an estimated deficit of about $58,000 . In order to overcome this deficit the Bill increases the maximum rate to 25c a square mile. The limitation upon the dollar for dollar subsidy payable by the Government to the fund is remoned The total amount of the loan that may be advanced to the fund is increased to $50,000. It is hoped that these measures will restore the fund to solvency within two years.

The provisions of the Bill are as follows: clause 1 is formal, and clause 2 amends section 5 of the principal Act. This section imposes the rate upon the land for the purpose of the Act. By subsection (2) of this section the maximum rate is 15c a square mile. The Bill raises this maximum rate to 25c a square mile. Clause 3 amends section 8 of the principal Act. This section provides for the Treasurer to pay to the credit of the fund a subsidy of $1 for every $1 collected as rates. Subsection (2) of this section provides that the subsidy shall not exceed $8,000. This restriction upon the amount of the subsidy is removed by the Bill. Clause 4 amends section 9 of the principal Act. This section provides for the Governor to make loans to the fund of an amount not exceeding $8,000. The Bill raises the maximum amount that may be advanced to the fund to $50,000.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN secured the adjournment of the debate.