**VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1945**

**House of Assembly, 23 October 1945, pages 582-3**

Second reading

The Hon. G.F. Jenkins (Newcastle-Minister of Agriculture)—Section19 and following sections of the Vermin Act provide that the owner or occupier of land must destroy all vermin upon the land and upon half of the width of adjoining roads. There is, however, no. provision in the Act requiring a landholder fill in or otherwise destroy rabbit warrens and it has been suggested to the Government by the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association that, in addition to providing for the destruction of vermin, the Act should provide for the destruction of rabbit warrens, as. unless the rabbit warrens are destroyed, effective control of the rabbit pest cannot be accomplished. Clause 2 makes amendments to the Vermin Act necessary to give effect to this suggestion. It is provided that, if an authorized person find any rabbit burrows on any land, he may give notice to the owner or occupier requiring him to fill in or otherwise destroy the rabbit burrows on the land and the half width of any adjoining roads. This provision is similar to section 23 under which an authorized officer may give notice requiring a landholder to destroy vermin found on his land. Other amendments made by the clause have the effect of rendering a landholder liable to penalties if he does not comply with the notice, of empowering the authorized officer to destroy the burrows on default by the landholder and recover the cost from the landholder, and of providing necessary forms to give effect to the clause.

Section 120 of the Vermin Act provides that a vermin board is not to expend in any year on salaries or fees to officers and on general office expenses, more than one-fourth of the whole of the rates declared for the district for that year. The purpose of this provision is, of course, to secure that an undue proportion of a board's revenue is not to be expended in administrative expenses. It sometimes occurs, however, that a board does not declare a rate in a particular year as it may have sufficient funds on hand to carry out its functions without declaring a rate, but, in such a ease, if section 120 were applied strictly, the board could not expend any part of its moneys in administrative expenses. Clause 3 therefore re-drafts section 120 and provides that for the purpose of providing salaries and fees to clerical officers and auditors and of providing the general office expenses of the board, a vermin board may in any financial year expend up to an amount of £75 a year or an amount equiva­lent to a rate of 2s. per square mile of the ratable property in the district, which ever amount is the greater. Those provisions will apply whether or not the board has declared a rate for that year.

Division X of Part III of the Vermin Act provides for the making of loans by the State Bank *to* vermin boards. Any suchloan may be made to a vermin board for the purpose of defraying the cost of erection and maintenance of fences of the board. Loans are repaid in twenty annual instalments and the moneys necessary for these repayments and the payment of interest are raised by the vermin board from rates declared upon ratable land within its district. Cases have arisen where, by reason of drought conditions or the necessity of reducing stock on a holding for the purpose of regenerating the holding, the payment of the rates necessary to service a loan to the vermin hoard has become unduly onerous on the holder of pastoral leases subject to those rates and the Pastoral Board has recommended that provision be made to provide relief in such cases. Clause 4 therefore provides that, in any case where the Treasurer is satisfied that the amounts required to be paid under a loan to a vermin board are such as to be unduly onerous upon ratepayers within the district of the board and are such as to retard the proper management for pastoral purposes of the land of the ratepayers, the Treasurer may, on the recommendation of the State Bank and the Pastoral Board, remit any interest or principal payable in respect of the loan or release the board from any future interest payments, or postpone the time for payment of any instalments of principal.

Section 234 of the Vermin Act provides that it shall be an offence to import any vermin into Kangaroo Island or any other island on the coast of the State, to permit any vermin to be let loose on any of these islands, or to keep any vermin alive on any vessel touching any of these islands. By section 4 vermin is defined to mean rabbits, wild dogs and foxes and other animals declared by proclamation to be vermin. No proclamation has been made, under this provision. The Government has received a request from the District Council of Kingscote suggesting that section 234 be extended so as to prohibit the importation of hares into the island and suggesting that the present maximum penalty of £100 for a breach of the section be increased to £500. The desirability of prohibiting the importation of vermin into islands of the State which are free from vermin is obvious and clause 5 accordingly increases from £100 to £500 the maximum penalty which may be, imposed for a breach of section 234. The clause also extends the meaning of the term “vermin” to include hares. This extension of meaning applies only to section 234 and will not apply to any other provision of the Vermin Act.

Clause 6 makes amendments to the principal Act for the purpose of substituting the words “Minister of Lands” for ‘‘Commissioner of CrownLands” throughout the Act and thus alters the verbiage of the Vermin Act so as to give effect to the change of this Ministerial title made by the Ministers’ Titles Act, 1944.

I move the second reading.

Mr. O’HALLORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.