

## DOG FENCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL (Attorney-General)

—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Act provides that, for the purpose of providing protection against the ingress of wild dogs, a dog-proof fence is to be established and maintained in the northern areas of the State and for this purpose the Act constitutes a board called the Dog Fence Board and gives to the board powers to establish and maintain the dog fence, to rate land in pastoral areas in order to raise the funds necessary for the purposes of the board, and to carry out various ancillary duties. Whilst the Act empowers the board to erect stretches of new fence to make good deficiencies in existing fences, the general plan of the Act is that fences already existing across the northern part of the State should be constituted the dog fence and, where necessary, be altered so as to be made dog-proof. These existing fences are, of course, privately owned by the lessees of the land concerned. The Act provides that the board may impose an annual rate upon ratable land, that is, in general, the land comprised in the pastoral areas. Section 26 provides for a general rate on all ratable land and the rate is not to exceed 1s. 3d. per square mile of ratable land. Section 27 provides that an additional rate may be imposed on ratable land adjoining the dog fence and situated within 10 miles of the fence. This rate also is not to exceed 1s. 3d. per square mile of ratable land and the section provides that, if an additional rate is declared under section 27 for any financial year, it is to be the same as the rate declared for that year under section 26.

Section 31 provides for a Government subsidy to be paid to the board, the subsidy being the pound for every pound of rates declared by the board. The revenue of the board is, in general, to be applied by the board in the inspection and maintenance of the dog fence. Section 24 provides that, in every financial year, the board is to pay to the owners of any fences which comprise part of the dog fence a uniform amount not exceeding £8 per mile of fence. These payments are to be applied by the owners towards the maintenance and inspection of the dog fence and the destruction of wild dogs in the vicinity of the fence and the Act imposes on those owners a duty

to carry out these tasks. Representations have been made that this amount of £8 per mile, which was fixed under the Act in 1946, is now insufficient to meet present day costs involved in carrying out the duties imposed on owners of the fence and it has been suggested that the maximum annual amount payable under section 24 should be increased to £16 per mile of fence. Such an increase would, of necessity, involve an increase in the rating powers of the Board. The board has therefore recommended that the Act be amended accordingly and this is done by the Bill. The suggestions for alteration of the law have been considered by the Stockowners' Association which has approved of the proposals. Clause 2 accordingly increases from £8 to £16 the maximum amount per mile of the dog fence which may be paid to an owner for expenditure on the maintenance and inspection of the fence and for the other purposes mentioned in section 24.

Clause 3 increases from 1s. 3d. to 3s. per square mile of ratable land the maximum rate which may be imposed on ratable land under section 26. Clause 4 deals with the additional rate which may, under section 27, be imposed on ratable land within 10 miles of the dog fence. No alteration to the maximum rate, namely, 1s. 3d. per square mile of ratable land, is proposed, but the clause provides that, where the rate under section 26 for any financial year is less than 1s. 3d. per square mile, any additional rate under section 27 for that year is to be of the same amount. If the rate under section 26 is 1s. 3d. or more, then the additional rate under section 27 is to be 1s. 3d. As before mentioned, section 31 provides for a Government subsidy on rates declared by the board. It is not proposed to increase the amount which may be paid by way of subsidy by the Government and clause 5 therefore provides that the pound for pound subsidy on rates declared by the board provided for by section 31 is not to apply to rates declared at an amount greater than 1s. 3d. per square mile. The effect is that the maximum Government subsidy for any financial year will not exceed the amount which is now payable under section 31.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON secured the adjournment of the debate.

## ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.35 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, September 29, at 2 p.m.

I hope that we, first the withstanding our capacity of trying to the matter of he should be work he now to members justify it.

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## MENT BILL.

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Attorney-General Motion on this t to the subject e moved. e without amend- adopted.