DOG ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1884

House of Assembly 15 October 1884, pages 1294-5

Second reading.

The MINISTER of JUSTICE and EDUCATION (Hon. R. C. Baker) moved the second reading of this Bill. There were various reasons which rendered the Bill necessary. The old Act was not carried out properly owing to certain defects which the Bill would remedy. Formerly a dog having a collar and number might wear that collar for years, and a stranger would have no means of seeing that the registration was out of date. Clause 9 .would remedy that by providing for a metal disc to be worn by dogs, the disc varying year by year. The same system was practically in operation in connection with the depasturing of cattle on the park lands. Hon. members would see that the fees for registration proposed were 7s. 6d. for dogs and 12s. 6d. for sluts. It was believed that the higher fee for sluts would tend much to reduce the number of dogs bred. (Hear, hear.) The evidence given before the Select Committee showed what ravages were com­mitted by dogs throughout the colony. Sir Samuel Davenport, Mr. John Warren, Mr. Pitts, and others, testified to fearful damage done by these animals, particularly in the pastoral districts of the colony. He had been told by a great many persons who owned large numbers of sheep that in the less settled districts, where the paddocks were larger, the ravages bjr dogs was something enormous. The number that was killed was not to be estimated by hundreds, but by tens of thousands. In those districts the dogs were not cared for, and were allowed to become wild. There was another alteration of the law in this Bill, clause 6 of which enacted that no aboriginal could keep more than two non-registered dogs. Under the old Act they could keep a pack of half-starved animals that caused great loss to the sheep owners. He be­lieved the Bill was admitted by all classes of the com­munity to be a necessity. It had been referred to a select committee, and no doubt Hon. members had read the evidence, and would recognise that the measure was urgently required.

The Hon. A. B. MURRAY would support the second reading of the Bill, though he was rather astonished to find that the measure was not a consolidating one. The Bill as it stood was a perfect mixture of existing Acts, and he was very sorry the Minister of Justice had allowed it to come before them in that state, because every person was interested in the easy inter­pretation of the law, but this Bill would require people to have a professional training to understand it. For himself he had suffered very much from the destruction of sheep by dogs, and believed that during the last forty years he had lost 100,000 sheep in this way. The fees in the second schedule were, he thought, too moderate, and ought to have been a guinea for dogs and a guinea and a half for sluts. The great fault of past Acts had been that no one was ap­pointed to carry them out, and he thought the same complaint would be applicable to this Bill if it were passed. It would never be carried out. He would however, support the second reading.

The MINISTER of JUSTICE AND EDUCATION (Hon. R. C. Baker) said he had explained in the first instance, that he was sorry this was not a consolidating Bill, but it had been referred to a select committee, and they could not go back on their recommendations. He thought it would have been better had they taken the whole matter into consideration and suggested a consolidated measure.

The Bill was then read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 16 were passed with several verbal amendments.

Schedules 1 and 2 were passed.