

## NOXIOUS ANIMALS PROHIBITION BILL

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it was a very simple one, and honourable members could easily master its contents in two minutes. It merely provided for an increase in the protection of our native and imported birds and other animals by the extension of the prohibition of the importation of noxious animals, so as to include polecats, stoats, and weasels. He need not point out to honourable members the importance of extending this prohibition, especially at the present time, when there was what might be called a rabbit scare amongst gentlemen of the pastoral persuasion, which might induce them to import things in order to exterminate the rabbits, which they would be hereafter very sorry they had introduced. He had been told, on good authority, that neither polecats, stoats, nor weasels would be found of any avail for the reduction of rabbits. Scarcely a week passed in which a plan was not suggested by which rabbits could only be made absolutely extinct, if it were only properly applied. He could not imagine that any honourable member would have any objection to offer to this Bill.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN hoped, as far as he was personally concerned, that the operation of this Bill would not be retrospective, for he had some weasels in his possession, and he would be sorry to be made the first victim of an Act of this kind. Besides, he had some very pronounced opinions as to the usefulness of weasels in this country, which led him to vote against the particular portion of the Bill having reference to those animals. ...

... The Hon. Captain FRASER said that the Hon. Mr. Robinson had stated that he was sure no member of the Council would speak on this subject from interested motives. He (Captain Fraser), however, was speaking from interested motives. It was all very well for gentlemen who were not suffering from the rabbit pest to talk in the way the honourable gentleman had done. He himself was very fond of birds; but if it came to be a question whether he would have birds or sheep, he would certainly vote in favour of the sheep. He would be delighted to see a shipload of stoats brought out to this country. Some honourable gentlemen had said a great deal about a matter of which they know very little. His honourable friend Colonel Brett, who had been many years in India, knew as well as himself that there was a great deal of feathered game there, and also a great many noxious animals, and it was some of those very animals that he would like to see brought out to this country. He would like to see mongooses brought out to this country. They would destroy every rabbit, but would not touch the lambs. If this honourable friend Mr. Holmes sent to India, he was sure he would get a hundred; mongooses were just as fond as of feathered game as they were of rabbits, and the result would be that there would not be much feathered game in the colony, but at the same time they would get rid of the rabbits. Some honourable members seemed to think that stoats and weasels ate the rabbits, but they did not do that; they simply sucked their blood. They always attacked the jugular, and killed the rabbits in that way. He would support the amendment.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL said the question had been so ably argued on both sides that he required to say very little in reply. He would like to see mongooses

introduced, because his honourable friend Captain Fraser seemed to think that they would be efficacious. His honourable friend Dr. Pollen, being in the painful position of an owner of weasels, was, of course, pecuniarily interested in the Bill, and he was sure, therefore, that the honourable gentleman would refrain from voting in regard to it. The Hon. Mr. Holmes had referred somewhat contemptuously to a letter of Professor Newman, and he was sorry that he had not that letter with him, in order that he must read it to the Council. He trusted that the Council would read the Bill a second time.