



## NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE

### (FARMING OF PROTECTED ANIMALS) AMENDMENT BILL

6 July 1995

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** I support the Bill. As members will be aware, my electorate encompasses Kangaroo Island. It is estimated that, each year on Kangaroo Island, 15 000 wallabies are destroyed under permit as part of the annual cull. Some landowners have expressed the view that that could be the tip of the iceberg and that the number could be as high as 20 000 each year. Some go so far as saying that only half of the wallabies are taken lawfully and, therefore, officially recorded.

Once those animals are given a value by way of processing into meat and their hides are used, we will have a truer picture of the number killed each year. Another benefit of giving the animals a value is that wallabies are now killed and left to rot in paddocks. Even if they are used for meatmeal, it would be better than just wasting them. Meatmeal brings in between \$400 to \$500 per tonne. Currently, dead wallabies are a ready source of food for wild cats. In turn, high numbers of wild cats increase the risk of sarco infections among the island's sheep population and, of course, cause untold damage to native wildlife, birds, lizards and small mammals.

A successful meeting was held on Kangaroo Island, involving National Parks and Wildlife officers, local farmers and members of the public. All parties agreed that it was necessary to utilise this wasted resource more effectively. Demand for game meat is increasing all over the world. We are in a unique selling position. There is nothing else like kangaroo on the world stage. Unlike our wine industry, we will have that stage to ourselves. Let us not be left behind again when it comes to our unique resources. We need to remember other Australian native animals from which overseas countries have developed industries while we were left flat-footed. I refer to emu farming in the United States and the breeding of galahs, I am told, in the Netherlands.

Wallaby and kangaroo meat is cholesterol free, lean and tasty. In fact, it could be classed as a healthy meat. Kangaroo and wallaby meat could be used to help to satisfy a market formerly held by whale meat. We could target markets in Finland, Norway and Sweden, where whale meat is now forbidden. Kangaroo and wallaby skins are very popular and demand is increasing. R.M. Williams, the internationally renowned clothing and footwear maker, says that it cannot obtain enough first-quality skins. The hides, among other things, are used to make one-piece uppers for top-quality boots. Ticks, barbed wire and bush scratches reduce the value of the leather, so the removal of those potential sources of damage by farming the animals will lead to a very high value added product.

Top-quality skins sell at the top end of the price range for leathers, and demand for that product is unlimited. That information is confirmed by Michell Leather, another successful South Australian company. It can sell every better quality kangaroo skin it can get. Demand is widespread. Presently, kangaroo hides are going into baseball boots for the Japanese market. Soccer and rugby boots are also made from kangaroo hides. Michell Leather says that it can handle more kangaroo skins full stop. The spokesperson said that the demand for better quality skins could be classed as unlimited. Michell Leather is unsure of the potential for wallaby skins as, so far, it has had limited access to good skins. Given the number killed on Kangaroo Island each year, that is about to change, if harvesting and farming can be properly organised.

There is potential to can meat into a gourmet product. Early results at one of our canneries using kangaroo meat is very positive. There is potential to farm kangaroos in a normal paddock situation. A mob on the West Coast, all descendants from an escaped pet kangaroo, are as quiet as a mob of sheep and can be

approached without stampeding them into flight. This proves they can be farmed using the right animals as the core mob for breeding.

Kangaroos and wallabies are the original inhabitants of the South Australian landscape. They have a soft pad to their feet and do little damage, unlike the cloven hoofs of our cattle and sheep. Environmentally, they are in tune with the land. In times of drought, their breeding mechanism switches off. While a joey may be conceived, it is not born until the drought turns into a time of plenty again. I refer to an article in the *Advertiser* of 6 June 1995.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will be able to continue next week.

*Continued: 20 July 1995*

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** As I was saying when this Bill was last before the House, an article in the *Advertiser* of 6 June 1995 indicated that the population of kangaroos in the wild can vary from 800 000 to 3 million, depending on seasonal conditions. Therefore, they are the ultimate animal to farm in our fragile erosion prone soils in drought prone regions such as Upper Eyre Peninsula. This week I have been contacted by local business people who have been operating in Adelaide for many years and who are now negotiating to take a trial shipment of wallabies from Kangaroo Island. These wallabies will be taken on a keep-and-kill permit from one of the local farmers. They will be taken as part of a culling program for wallabies. Previously, their carcasses were just left to rot. As I mentioned previously, there are possibly 30 000 of these wallabies being killed on Kangaroo Island now. This farmer hopes to undertake farming of the wallabies when the Bill is passed.

On the mainland few wallabies are left in the wild. However, with the passing of this Bill there will be an incentive to re-establish wallabies and kangaroos behind fences, thereby enabling an assessment to be made as to whether they could be a viable alternative to cloven-hoofed animals in some of our farming regions. I believe that in future we will see many more of our native animals in farming areas once they are given a value. It makes sense to explore the possibilities that these native animals have, and to do this we need to change the Act to allow the appropriate studies to be undertaken. I support the Bill.