

CORRESPONDENCE

KANGAROO MENACE

(To the Editor, "Western Herald.")

Dear Sir,—I noted in your recent issue two references to the kangaroo pest coming from far apart localities — Victoria and the local Golf Club.

In the Victorian Graziers' Association Council, it was voiced (I quote) that the kangaroo mobs were causing considerable damage to crops and property, and farmers were losing large sums because of their depredations.

A suggestion that moves be made to replace the kangaroo on the Australian Coat of Arms by a sheep, so as to stop public sympathy for the kangaroo, coming from Mr. A. Jones, Victorian grazier, is very interesting, as a hint that the pest's toleration is deeply rooted in public sentiment. How pathetic and unfortunate this is! The pest that is ruining our pastures, causing depredation to crops — a pest that is outnumbering our flocks — needs kid-glove handling, so as not to irk public sympathy!

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Does it matter to the public that our country is hopelessly overstocked, thanks to the kangaroo, and is left to face the inexorable law of "survival of the fittest"? And our flocks must face it, and perish!

Blinded by sentiment, not many of us can see calamity's insidious approach. "Few kangaroos here and there—what does it matter? They were here before us." So they were! And if they stayed in their original low proportion, we would also indulge in mutual sentiment with all nature lovers. But let us face the reality.

In Western Australia, kangaroos are outnumbering sheep 3 to 1; in West of Darling, 2 to 1; and it is reported by the Stock Inspector, who made a trip by plane from here to Broken Hill, that in this district that carries 3 million sheep, there are 4 million kangaroos!

Should not this be the time to give the kangaroo more serious consideration, before it is too late?

Alas, to me, with my comprehensive study of the subject, it looks already too late. Our present dry spell may accelerate the approach of the

celerate the approach of the crisis. Rain may postpone the calamity; but the inevitable must come!

Only a miracle alone, in the nature of an epidemic like mixomatosis, could prevent the crisis. My only consolation is in a kind of home-born philosophy, perhaps born of old age, and of an uneventful life in the West—dry West, fed and nourished by political homilies! Thirsty West, promised deluge of weirs and Menindies along the old, old, weary Darling—promises old and stale, rank, unfulfilled!

Perhaps it is a blessing in disguise. As a nation, we are easy-going — drunk with false prosperity—and certainly need a lesson, lest worse come to us.

Approaching calamity may save us from political abuses in taxation and wild goose schemes that run into millions and millions, to breaking point, along the coast line, favoured city and political resorts; while inland Australia—the heart and backbone of this great country—stays empty and desolate—the habitation of kangaroos!

T. VOLKOFSKY,
Curraweena.

