

ROYALTY LIFTED FROM GREY KANGAROO SKINS

The Minister for Fisheries, Mr. Kelly, recently advised that he had acceded to a request from the Farmers' Union of W.A. (Inc.) to lift the royalty payment of 9d. per skin from all grey kangaroo skins for a trial period of two years. The amendment to the Fauna Protection Act Regulations would be published in the next issue of the Government Gazette and from that time all kangaroo skins would be royalty-free. Mr. Kelly advised, however, that licenses to authorise the sale of skins of kangaroos taken in the South-West Land Division were still required.

On the present low market price of 4/- per lb. for first-grade skins, occasioned by a falling off in overseas demand, the royalty payment absorbed an unfair proportion of the hunters' net return, Mr. Kelly said. The rate of 9d. per skin had been set when prices ranged up to and beyond 12/6d per lb. and had then been a reasonable levy.

The Farmers' Union hoped that the lifting of royalty would bring about increased activity by professional shooters and amateurs in those areas where kangaroos were over-plentiful and causing serious damage.

"A careful watch will be kept by my officers during the trial period to ascertain whether this hope will be realised, and to ensure that these otherwise attractive animals are not exterminated. This is the main reason why it is necessary to retain the existing licensing system", Mr. Kelly concluded.