

1890.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC PETITIONS A TO L COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF)

ON THE PETITION (No. 225) OF MARTIN CHAPMAN AND OTHERS, OF WELLINGTON, RELATIVE TO
THE WANTON DESTRUCTION OF SEA-BIRDS ON ISLANDS ADJACENT TO NEW ZEALAND.

Report brought up 28th August, 1890, and ordered to be printed.

REPORT.

THE petitioners pray that the destruction of marine birds and their eggs, except for food, may be prohibited by law on all islands within the boundaries of New Zealand.

I am directed to report that, in the opinion of the Committee, legislative action ought immediately to be taken to control and limit the destruction of birds, seals, and other animals frequenting the islands named in the petition, as well as the Macquarie Islands, should these be transferred to the jurisdiction of New Zealand.

28th August, 1890.

A. P. SEYMOUR, Chairman.

PETITION No. 225, MARTIN CHAPMAN AND OTHERS.

To the Honourable the Members of the Legislative Council and the House
of Representatives.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE UNDERSIGNED HUMBLY SHOWETH TO YOUR HONOURABLE HOUSES
AS FOLLOWS:—

1. It is known to your honourable Houses that certain outlying islands are included in the boundaries of the Colony of New Zealand. Your petitioners in particular specify the Chatham Islands, the Snares, the Lord Auckland Group, Campbell Island, Antipodes Island, and the Bounty Group, but in so specifying they do not desire to exclude other islands and parts of the colony to which this petition would apply.

2. The said islands are the home and breeding-resort of many kinds of sea-birds, among which your petitioners in particular specify the birds known as mutton-birds, penguins, terns, gulls, albatrosses of various species, petrels of various species.

3. Almost all of these birds are absolutely helpless when on land, and are unable to escape—and barely attempt to escape capture.

4. The penguins congregate in what are known as rookeries, where numbers varying from a few hundreds to many thousands are to be found. They lay their eggs on the bare ground. The nurture of their young keeps them about the land for the greater part of the year.

5. Mutton-birds and various kinds of petrel and other birds burrow in the soft ground, and there lay their eggs.

6. Albatrosses lay their eggs in easily accessible places on the hills. Each female bird lays one egg. Their young remain on shore for a year before they can fly.

7. In many countries in the Northern Hemisphere all sea-birds form an abundant and wholesome source of food supply to large numbers of people; your petitioners believe that there is no reason why this should not be the case at a future time in this hemisphere. At the present day mutton-birds are largely used for food.

8. Your petitioners are informed and believe that certain persons have commenced to capture the sea-birds at the said islands, and to boil them down to extract oil therefrom.

9. Your petitioners are informed that an estimate has been made of the numbers of the most numerous species of bird on the islands where they are most abundant, to wit, the penguins on the Bounty Group, and that the number probably does not exceed three millions. Your petitioners also believe that the penguins in all the islands your petitioners have named would not exceed twice the above number all gathered together as aforesaid in rookeries easily accessible from land or sea. A party of four or five men could, your petitioners believe, with ease, in one day capture every penguin on the Snares; in a few weeks every penguin on the whole Auckland Group; in two or three days every penguin on Campbell Island; in one day every penguin on the Antipodes Island; and in a fortnight every penguin on the Bounty Group. A short additional time would