

1890.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# JOINT COMMITTEE ON LIVE-STOCK AND RABBITS

(REPORTS OF THE).

(HON. G. RANDALL JOHNSON, CHAIRMAN.)

*Presented to the House of Representatives, and ordered to be printed.*

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## ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

*Extract from the Journals of the Legislative Council.*

*Ordered*, "That a Select Committee be appointed, to consist of ten members, to consider all matters pertaining to live-stock and rabbits; with power to confer and sit together with any similar Committee which may be appointed by the House of Representatives, and to agree to a joint or separate report: the Committee to consist of the Hon. Mr. Acland, the Hon. Mr. Miller, the Hon. Mr. Johnson, the Hon. Captain Morris, the Hon. Mr. Peter, the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn, the Hon. Mr. Walker, the Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore, the Hon. Mr. Wigley, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. STEVENS.)

*Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.*

*Resolved*, "That Standing Order No. 178 be suspended, in order that a Select Committee, consisting of ten members, may be appointed to consider all matters pertaining to live-stock and to rabbits; with power to confer and sit together with any similar Committee which may be appointed by the Legislative Council, and to agree to a joint or separate report; the Committee to have power to call for persons, papers, and records; three to be a quorum: members to be—the Hon. Sir J. Hall, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Dodson, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Lance, Mr. Lawry, Mr. J. McKenzie, the Hon. Captain Russell, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.)

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## THE SHEEP BILL.

THE Committee, to which was referred the Sheep Bill, 1890, have the honour to report that they have considered the various provisions of the Bill, and that, subject to the alterations and amendments shown upon the copy of the Bill attached hereto, they are of opinion the Bill should be allowed to proceed.

30th July, 1890.

## No. 131.—Petition of WILLIAM OSBORNE.

THE petitioner states that he was charged with and convicted of being the owner of a sheep infected with lice in the public sale-yards at Masterton, whereas the said sheep did not belong to him and had only become mixed with his sheep by accident.

I am directed by the Joint Live-stock and Rabbits Committee to report that your Committee has examined the petitioner and Inspector Drummond, and has obtained from Colonel Roberts, Resident Magistrate, a report upon the statements made in the petition, and the case heard and decided by him. From the evidence thus obtained it appears that a sheep infected with lice was found, as stated, amongst the petitioner's sheep, but the ownership of it was from the first denied by the petitioner, who, however, was unable to say how or when it became mixed with his flock, and failed to produce satisfactory evidence in proof of the assertion that the sheep did not belong to him, although at a later date such evidence was forthcoming. Your Committee is of opinion that the requirements of the case would have been fully met by an order to dip the sheep, and recommends that the sum of £1 12s., the amount of fine and costs paid by petitioner, and £1 additional expenses, be recouped to him.

20th August, 1890.

## THE RABBIT NUISANCE BILL.

THE Committee, to which was referred the Rabbit Nuisance Bill, 1890, has the honour to report that it has considered the various provisions of the Bill, and that, subject to the alterations and amendments shown upon the copy of the Bill attached hereto, it is of opinion that the Bill should be allowed to proceed.

21st August, 1890.

## THE CATTLE BILL.

THE Committee, to whom was referred the Cattle Bill, 1890, has the honour to report that it has considered the various provisions of the Bill, and that, subject to the alterations and amendments shown upon the copy of the Bill attached hereto, it is of opinion that the Bill should be allowed to proceed.

22nd August, 1890.

## No. 192.—Petition of the Rev. J. C. ANDREW.

THE petitioner states that the powers already possessed by Rabbit Inspectors have been abused, and prays that their powers be not extended.

I am directed by the Joint Live-stock and Rabbits Committee to report that the Committee cannot recommend that the prayer of the petition be granted.

20th August, 1890.

## No. 245.—Petition of ALLAN LOW.

THE petitioner states that he entered into contracts with the Stock Department, represented by its Inspectors, to breed ferrets for a term of years, and that the department wrongfully put an end to the contracts before the time agreed on. He prays for relief.

I am directed by the Joint Live-stock and Rabbits Committee to report that, the subject of this petition having already been dealt with by the Supreme Court, the Committee has no recommendation to make.

3rd September, 1890.

## No. 53.—Petition of EWEN McDONALD.

THE petitioner states that his land at Waihemo is so situated as to be invaded by rabbits from adjoining country every autumn; that he has spent all his means in improving his land; and that from the fault of the Rabbit Department he is annually deprived of his winter feed and forced to sacrifice his stock.

I am directed to report that the Joint Live-stock and Rabbits Committee recommends that the Minister in charge of the Stock Department should refer this case to the Chief Inspector for report upon it, the session being too far advanced for the Committee to get the necessary information respecting it.

4th September, 1890.

## No. 36.—Petition of JOHN COLE CHAPPLE and 70 Others.

THE petitioners state that runholders in their district, with the consent of the Inspector, allow rabbits to breed almost undisturbed on their land in spring and summer. They pray that the runholders be compelled to kill the rabbits during those seasons.

I am directed by the Joint Live-stock and Rabbits Committee to report that the Committee recommends that this petition be referred to the Minister in charge of the Stock Department for the purpose of inquiring into the statement made in the third paragraph of the petition.

11th September, 1890.

## No. 152.—Petition of J. E. GLOVER and 154 Others.

THE petitioners state that the Rabbit Act has been a complete failure in their district, and that under present conditions farmers are unable to cope with the rabbit-pest. They pray for assistance by the supply of wire-netting, and that, under proper restrictions, wire-netting be made a legal boundary-fence.

I am directed by the Joint Live-stock and Rabbits Committee to report that the prayers of this petition have been met partly by legislation of this session and partly by recommendations in the general report of the Committee.

11th September, 1890.

## GENERAL REPORT.

YOUR Committee has the honour to report that its time has been mainly occupied with the consideration of the Bills relating to sheep, cattle, and the rabbit-nuisance, which were referred to it from the House of Representatives, and which have passed through all stages in both Houses of Parliament.

*Sheep.*

Your Committee has also had under its notice various matters connected with the Live-stock Department, and is much gratified to learn from the reports of Inspectors that on the 30th June last clean certificates were held by all owners of sheep in the colony. The three districts, Tophouse, Kaikoura, and Miranda, which last year were still infected with scab, have, after a very careful inspection, been declared free from this disease, whilst no fresh outbreak has occurred in any other district.

Your Committee considers that there is now good reason for believing New Zealand to be absolutely free from scab; but two years must elapse before it can be deemed to be clean within the meaning of the regulations in force throughout the Australasian Colonies for the prevention of diseases in stock.

Lung-worm and other diseases in sheep being on the increase, your Committee considers it very desirable that Professor Thomas should be requested to complete the investigations commenced by him a few years ago, and also suggests that Mr. J. F. McClean, M.R.C.V.S., should be employed in the same direction.

*Cattle.*

With regard to cattle, the attention of your Committee has been drawn to the prevalence in New Zealand, to a considerable extent, of the disease known as tuberculosis, and to a less extent of cancer. It is very desirable that the probable danger to human beings arising from these causes should be brought prominently before the public, and very stringent measures taken to prevent the possibility of meat or milk of diseased animals being used for food in any way. The Cattle Bill referred to above is intended to provide the necessary authority for inspection of cattle, and the destruction of such as are diseased; but, until the establishment of public slaughter-yards, under proper control, there must always be considerable risk of diseased meat finding its way into the markets.

The very able report of the Departmental Committee appointed in 1888 to inquire into the nature and extent of pleuro-pneumonia and tuberculosis in the United Kingdom contains much useful information, and your Committee considers that the Government have acted wisely in causing that portion of the report referring to tuberculosis to be reprinted in the colony for distribution by the Live-stock Department, but does not think it has been sufficiently circulated.

When it is generally understood that tuberculosis in animals is virtually the same disease as that known as consumption in man, that it is communicable to human beings by the use of either meat or milk of diseased animals, and that calculations based upon the statistics of the Registrars of various countries go to prove consumption to be "the cause of from ten to fourteen per cent. of all deaths among human beings," the serious importance of checking its spread in every possible way cannot but be recognised.

Believing, then, that nothing but a generally-diffused knowledge of the evils here referred to, and their causes, will ever effectually lead to their prevention and cure, your Committee recommends that full information regarding tuberculosis and cancer in stock be circulated by the Government as widely as possible.

*Rabbits.*

The rabbit-nuisance still continues to spread, and, although in some districts the actual number of rabbits seems to have somewhat decreased, the infested area is ever increasing. The number of skins exported during the year ended the 31st March, 1890, was 10,295,217, of the value of £87,218, being a decrease in number of 2,297,960, and in value of £10,414, upon the returns of the previous year.

Your Committee desires again to draw attention to the enormous annual loss that the colony is suffering from the rabbit-pest—a loss probably equal to the interest on our national debt; and seriously to point out the shortsightedness of a policy which allows session after session to pass without providing the means for introducing the natural enemy in sufficient numbers. This has now been amply proved to be one of the most effectual means of permanently grappling with this gigantic evil. Your Committee has discharged the functions imposed upon it: on the Legislature must now rest the responsibility. Experience still points to poisoning and to fencing as most valuable aids in dealing with the pest, and your Committee, confirming the recommendations on this subject contained in the report of the Joint Committee of last session, strongly urges,—

1. That the Government should encourage the breeding of ferrets in every possible way, and should continue the introduction of stoats and weasels in large and continuous numbers; and
2. That, taking into consideration the trouble and hardship that small settlers in the neighbourhood of large tracts of uncultivated land are subject to from the incursion of rabbits, the Government should afford assistance to enable such settlers to protect themselves by supplying them with wire-netting for fencing on easy terms.

11th September, 1890.

[The evidence, &c., was not ordered to be printed.]

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