

1922.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

(REPORT OF THE) FOR THE YEAR 1921-22.

*Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.*

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## REPORT.

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The Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Wellington.

SIR,—

15th June, 1922.

I beg to submit the following report of the work of the Board of Agriculture for the year ended 30th April last.

Mr. J. Massey, representative on the Board of the Auckland District, I regret to state, had to resign his seat on account of pressure of business preventing his attending meetings as frequently as he wished. Mr. E. D. McLennan, of Papakura, was elected to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Massey's resignation.

The Board met on several occasions during the year, and the principal part of our work was in connection with policy matters of the Department, chiefly concerning the experimental farms and horticultural stations. As on previous occasions, we also attended, either as a full Board or as representatives, all conferences held during the year affecting the agricultural interests. One which stands out in this connection is that of the 10th January, 1922, regarding the meat pooling and marketing scheme; but, as this is specially mentioned below, no further comment is required just here.

### EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.

You will remember that you requested us, by letter dated 27th July, 1921, to go carefully into the whole question of the State farms, especially as regards the expenditure involved by them and the actual measure of benefit to the Dominion resulting from their operations; also as to what would be the best course to adopt, in the interests of the Dominion as a whole, with the two farms established by the Repatriation Department in Otago (Moa Seed-farm) and in Canterbury (Avonhead) for the purpose of training returned soldiers in farming operations.

With regard to the Moa Seed-farm, near Roxburgh, Dr. Reakes stated that the time had arrived when the Repatriation Department found it necessary to give up the responsibility of soldiers' training-farms. He informed us that the obvious line of action was for the responsibility to pass to the Department of Agriculture; and this raised the question of the policy to be adopted by the Department in connection with experimental farms generally.

The reports and accounts of all the Government farms, and the general policy to be adopted in their management with regard to education, experimental work, research, and demonstration, were discussed at length at our meetings in conjunction with Dr. Reakes. The following resolutions were passed:—

(1.) That the Board be supplied annually with balance-sheets of the various State farms, set out in simple commercial form on similar lines to the statement hereunder:—

RUAKURA FARM.									
					£				
Stock on hand	..	..	..	..	12,000	Sales of stock	..	..	1,500
Purchases	..	..	..	..	1,000	Stock on hand	..	..	12,000
Expenses	..	..	..	..	5,000	Other receipts	..	..	7,000
Balance, Cr. Profit and Loss Account..	..	..	..	..	2,500				
					£20,500				
					£20,500				

(2.) That the Board is of opinion that a fresh valuation of the Government experimental farms should be made, and that the buildings should be revalued, and written down to a valuation based on the actual value of such buildings for the purposes of the farms as at present conducted.

(3.) That in connection with the accounts of the different State farms the Board thinks that the amount spent on educational work should be separated from the general accounts, as such expenditure cannot be expected to bring in any income, and therefore should not be a charge on the farm.

*Central Development Farm, Weraroa.*—As it had already been decided by the Government that Levin was the most suitable centre for the establishment of an agricultural college when funds for that purpose were available (a decision endorsed by the Board), it was deemed desirable that no change should be made in the present conduct of the farm.

We were of opinion that the *Ruakura Farm of Instruction* was an ideal one on which to establish a farm school when it was no longer required for the training of returned disabled soldiers. It was therefore resolved, "That the Board of Agriculture, looking forward to Weraroa as the farm where the agricultural college will be established, recommends that, as soon as practicable after the training of soldiers has ceased, Ruakura Farm of Instruction should be developed on the lines of a farm school to be conducted by the Department of Agriculture."

We are glad to note that winter schools for farmers are already being conducted both at Ruakura and at Weraroa with conspicuous success.

With regard to *Moumahaki Experimental Farm*, we also agreed that the experimental portion of the farm might very well be reduced without diminishing its usefulness to the farming community, and the proposals already submitted to you by the Department were endorsed. In this connection we passed the following resolution: "That the Board of Agriculture is glad to hear that the area of Moumahaki Farm is to be reduced. It recognizes that in a dairying district the best purpose the remaining portion of the land can be put to is dairying on the best commercial lines, and therefore recommends that a demonstration should be made whereby farmers would be shown the benefit to be obtained in dairying by growing fodder crops to supplement the grass during winter and summer for dairy cows."

*Te Kauwhata Horticultural Station.*—The demonstrations aimed at when this station was first started having been completed, it was agreed by us that it had served its purpose, and consequently might also be reduced in size. It was, however, thought that a portion round the homestead and vineyard should be retained. We therefore resolved, "That the Board of Agriculture is of opinion that Te Kauwhata Horticultural Station having as a whole served its purpose as a demonstration farm, most of the land should be sold, and all except the vineyard, orchard, and necessary buildings realized upon at the first favourable opportunity." We have since been informed that this is being given effect to.

The *Tauranga Horticultural Station*, which has specialized in raising citrus fruit, &c., we thought, should be retained for a longer term, until the results of the research work in this direction had been completed and demonstrated, but that the expenditure on the station might be reduced. It was accordingly resolved, "That the Board of Agriculture is of opinion that the Tauranga Horticultural Station should be retained for a period, until it is seen (1) whether citrus fruit is suitable for the district, and (2) if so, whether citrus-fruit growing can be established in the neighbourhood on remunerative lines. Further consideration to be given as to the necessity for retaining this farm in, say, two years' time."

We have been informed by Dr. Reakes that it has been decided by the Government that this station is to be closed as a Government farm, and that satisfactory arrangements have been made with the present Manager of the farm to take it over on lease for five years, rent-free, and to work it in conjunction with the Department regarding experiments in citrus-growing.

*Arataki Horticultural Station.*—It was also agreed that this station in the Hawke's Bay District, which had been originally started mainly with the object of raising phylloxera-resistant vines, might be reduced in size with advantage, a small area of fruit land being retained for special research work in conjunction with the fruitgrowing industry. The following resolution was therefore passed: "That the Board of Agriculture is of opinion that the Arataki Horticultural Station might be materially decreased in area, but that a small area be retained for experimental purposes; also that the expenses of the station should be drastically curtailed."

Dr. Reakes has since informed us that after careful consideration it had been decided to close this station, the property reverting to the Lands Department.

We also sent a recommendation to you that in the case of the horticultural stations local committees should be appointed to make suggestions as to the experimental work and the best methods of assisting fruitgrowers.

#### REPATRIATION DEPARTMENT'S FARMS IN THE SOUTH ISLAND.

The question as to what action should be taken with regard to the two farms in the South Island that had been established by the Repatriation Department for training returned soldiers, and which were now no longer required for that purpose, was also discussed with Dr. Reakes and Mr. Young, Director of the Live-stock Division of the Department.

*Avonhead Farm.*—It was agreed that the expenditure likely to be incurred in the working of this farm would probably be so heavy that the authorities would be well advised to dispose of it, as it did not promise to be of much assistance to the agricultural community; and it was therefore resolved, "That, with regard to the Repatriation Department's farm at Avonhead, the Board of Agriculture is of opinion, after having had the accounts of the farm before it, as well as a description of the land, also the evidence of Mr. Young, Director of the Live-stock Division of the Department

of Agriculture, together with the prospects of further advantage to be expected from the farm, that the land should be sold, as it is not likely to be of any practical assistance to the agricultural community in the future."

We were subsequently advised by Dr. Reakes that it had been decided to cut this farm up into small blocks suitable for poultry-keepers, the Department retaining about 14 acres for a poultry-station to give advice to poultry-keepers.

*The Moa Seed-farm*, in Otago, was, however, considered to be in a different category. We discussed three alternatives in connection with this farm: (1) For the Lands Department to resume possession of the land and use it to the best advantage; (2) to run the farm as an experimental farm, so called; and (3) to run the place as a commercial seed-growing farm.

The necessity for producing pure seed of the different varieties of grasses and cereals being of such importance to farmers, it was thought it would be inadvisable to close a farm that had been specially designed for this purpose, and which already showed very promising results. We thought that under careful management such a seed-farm in Otago could be made a commercial success, and if it were subsequently deemed advisable to sell it or lease it arrangements might be made to dispose of it to some company who would agree to work it on similar lines to those that had been adopted at Svaloff, in Sweden. We accordingly resolved, "That, with regard to the Repatriation Department's Otago farm (Moa Seed-farm), the Board of Agriculture is of opinion that as a seed-farm this should be taken over by the Department of Agriculture, but that as far as possible it is desirable that the farm should not clash with the work of Lincoln College. After a few years it would be well to consider (1) whether it should be continued as a Government farm, or (2) sold to some company which would continue the work."

Dr. Reakes later informed us that a committee had offered to take this farm over and to run it as a seed-farm at their own expense for a term of five years, with a view to demonstrating what could be done in the way of up-to-date seed-growing. We were gratified to hear of this, and forwarded you the following resolution: "That the Board hears with satisfaction that the public-spirited offer of the committee to take over the Moa Seed-farm for five years is likely to be accepted by the Government. The Board is convinced that it is of the utmost importance to the future of farming in New Zealand that farmers sow the highest grade of pure seeds, and this seed-farm, in a district which is eminently suited for the growth of seeds, is likely to foster the use of pure seed."

#### PRESENT SYSTEM OF WORKING AND EXPENDITURE OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

We had a very lengthy discussion with Dr. Reakes regarding the general activities of the Department, and the steps which have been in progress for some time past for curtailing the departmental expenditure without reducing its practical value to the country. Dr. Reakes furnished us with detailed information which enabled members to obtain a close insight into the many and varied activities of the Department, and the lines on which economies in expenditure had been and were still being brought about. In this connection the opinion was expressed that educational and instructional work was of particular value at the present time, and that no curtailment of this should take place. It was finally decided to pass the following motion and to forward the same on to you: "Having regard to the fact that increased production is necessary to meet our engagements, any expenditure in the education of the farmer or the necessary inspection in connection with food and the food exports should not be curtailed. If it is in the opinion of the Minister absolutely necessary to reduce expenditure in the Agriculture Department, the Board considers that the least objectionable reduction would be in not enforcing the Noxious Weeds Act, except that the eradication of blackberry should be continued, and that the Act should be recast in this direction."

The question of the simplification of accounts of the experimental farms was also fully discussed with Dr. Reakes and the Accountant of the Department of Agriculture. Several points were raised by members of the Board which required consideration, and the subject was left over for a further conference, in the hope that some simplification might be made in the methods at present employed, and the whole of the accounts so arranged as to lighten the work of the departmental officers and reduce the cost of management.

#### MEAT POOLING AND MARKETING SCHEME.

At your invitation we attended meetings of producers and others interested, which were held on the 20th December, 1921, and the 10th January, 1922, regarding the meat pooling and marketing scheme. The conference convened by you, which was held on the 20th December, 1921, in your room in the Parliamentary Buildings, was a preliminary meeting to consider the question of the compulsory pooling of the meat of the Dominion. The parliamentary Committee which had been dealing with the question was present, also representatives of the standing producers' committee, meat-freezing companies, Sheepowners' Federation, Dairy Association, mercantile firms, as well as meat-buyers. Mr. D. Jones, M.P., took the chair at the meeting, and outlined the Government's proposals.

After an exhaustive discussion the following resolution was carried, with one dissentient: "That this meeting endorses the proposals of the Government to make a compulsory pool of the meat of the Dominion."

At the close of this meeting the chairman stated that another and larger meeting would be held after the New Year to further consider the proposals.

It was thought advisable, instead of the Board sending out invitations to the various bodies connected with agriculture and to representative men, that meetings of producers should be held in the various districts, and that delegates to a conference be appointed by such meetings, to make it as

representative as possible. This was carried out all over New Zealand, and a conference of producers' representatives so appointed was held in the Dominion Farmers' Institute on the 10th January, 1922. The Right Hon. Mr. Massey, Prime Minister, presided, and you also were present. All the members of the Board attended the conference.

The Premier's address and that of Mr. D. Jones, M.P., were very exhaustive. The Premier dealt with the subject from his experience after seeing the meat trade in London, and Mr. Jones gave details of the meat-control proposal which had been carefully considered, and thought that if a committee were appointed to go more fully into the whole question, taking evidence from those interested in the trade, a Board could greatly help the producers by assisting in the pooling of meat, without unduly interfering with those already engaged in the trade.

After the Government's proposal had been fully explained by the Right Hon. the Prime Minister and by Mr. D. Jones, M.P., chairman of the parliamentary Committee, the following motion was carried: "(1) That this meeting of New Zealand producers recognizes the necessity of a national scheme for the marketing of New Zealand meat, and supports the principle of a compulsory pool; (2) that a committee be appointed to bring this scheme either wholly or partly into operation during the present season."

The meeting then proceeded to the election of the committee, with the result that the following were declared duly elected: For the North Island—Mr. W. Polson, Mr. J. S. Jessep, Mr. H. B. Williams, Mr. George Pearce, Mr. A. E. Harding, Mr. T. A. Duncan, Mr. W. Perry. For the South Island—Mr. J. Begg, Mr. A. J. Murray, Mr. J. C. N. Grigg, Mr. E. Bowmar, Mr. J. O. Coop, Mr. D. J. Wright, Mr. E. P. Burbury.

Subsequent to these meetings Parliament passed the Meat Export Control Act, 1921-22, setting up a Board with power to control the meat-export trade, consisting of two persons appointed by the Governor-General as representatives of the Government, and five persons elected as representatives of the producers of meat for export; also one representative of stock and station agents. Messrs. A. E. Harding and D. Jones, M.P., were appointed Government representatives; Messrs. T. A. Duncan, J. C. N. Grigg, A. Hamilton, M.P., J. S. Jessep, and W. Perry were elected producers' representatives; and Mr. W. D. Hunt was appointed by the Governor-General as the representative of stock and station agents on the Board.

We view with great satisfaction the step that has been taken in the matter of meat-export control, which we firmly believe will be in the interests not of the producers alone, but of the whole Dominion generally; and it is gratifying to know that the administration of the Act is in the hands of such a strong Board which is so thoroughly representative of the producers.

#### IMPROVEMENT IN METHODS OF HANDLING DAIRY-PRODUCE.

The improvement in methods of handling dairy-produce, with a view of reducing the cost of production and preventing unfair competition between the various co-operative factories, was discussed at length by us with Dr. Reakes and the Director of the Dairy Division of the Department of Agriculture. It was pointed out that there was a great deal of overlapping, owing to the fact that several co-operative factories were competing for cream-supplies in various districts, and that this constituted a risk of the quality of the manufactured output being impaired. We requested the Director of the Dairy Division to bring the matter up for discussion at Palmerston North when delegates of the dairying industry met there, with a view of trying to bring about more satisfactory arrangements than those at present existing. The Board thought, however, that much benefit would accrue from more co-operation in the truest sense being shown amongst dairy factories.

*Farm Dairy Instructors.*—We are also further of opinion that the work of farm dairy instructors, wholly or partly paid for by dairy companies, but carrying out their duties with the authority of Government officers, was of great value in keeping the quality of our dairy-produce at a high standard, and that the cost involved by this was amply recouped by the better returns accruing. This matter was also discussed with the departmental officers, and the following resolution passed: "That in order to raise the quality of dairy-products, which is so essential to retain the high standard New Zealand butter and cheese has attained, the Board urges as a matter of the greatest importance that dairy companies should ask the Government to appoint official farm dairy instructors. The Board believe that the companies will amply recoup any expense incurred by improving the quality of their products."

#### ORGANIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL BUREAUX IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

This matter, which has been exercising the minds of the agricultural community, was discussed by us, and with a view to ascertaining what has been done in other countries in the way of consolidating farming interests we have taken steps to obtain as full information as possible from the United States regarding the organization of different farmers' societies in that country. Much information has already been obtained, and as soon as our inquiries in the matter are completed the particulars will be furnished to the committee set up by the Council of Agriculture to go into the question of federating the various bodies representing farmers in New Zealand.

#### BOYS' AGRICULTURAL CLUBS.

In connection with this matter we considered it desirable to foster as much as possible the formation of clubs amongst school-children, and thought that the initiatory steps in the matter should be taken by the farmers in the districts themselves. Dr. Reakes promised that his officers would

give every assistance and encouragement to the movement. We were supplied with some very interesting information by the provincial secretary of the Taranaki Executive of the Farmers' Union regarding the formation of the clubs, also the work which had been done in this direction in the Taranaki District by the Union, and we decided to again urge upon the various bodies representing the agricultural interests the desirableness of doing all that was practicable to foster this movement, from which such good results had been obtained not only in the United States and Canada, but also in those portions of New Zealand where it had been tried. Farmers' Unions, agricultural and pastoral associations, and the Otago Expansion League were accordingly circularized.

#### CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW, AND PROPOSAL TO FORM ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

We received a letter from you in reply to our representations in regard to the establishment of a championship show, expressing regret that in view of the continuance of the general financial stringency it was inevitable that consideration of this matter must stand over for some time, but that as soon as the financial position had eased sufficiently you would again bring the question before Cabinet. We regret that the proposal has had to be postponed meanwhile, but hope it will only be for a short length of time. As a result of assistance not being forthcoming from the Government, we understand that a movement has been set on foot by the Council of Agriculture for the purpose of establishing a Royal Agricultural Society, but that owing to the response to the circulars sent out the executive of the Council considered that the time was not opportune to press the proposal; it is therefore in abeyance in the meantime.

#### ISLAND QUARANTINE STATION FOR IMPORTED PLANTS.

We discussed with the Director-General of Agriculture a proposal for substituting a system of plant quarantine for the present method of controlling the importation of plants into New Zealand. We were informed that the proposal is supported by the New Zealand Nurserymen's Association and the New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Federation, but we decided before coming to a final decision in the matter, in view of the existing financial position, to ascertain what the cost would be of getting sufficient suitable accommodation for the proposed station at Motuihi Quarantine Island in Auckland Harbour.

#### PROPOSED LEGISLATION.

Dr. Reakes informed us that a fresh draft Seeds Bill was in course of preparation, which would replace the Bill previously drawn, and until the draft was ready to submit to the Board nothing further could be done in the matter beyond getting the feeling of farmers and others interested in the various districts regarding the desirableness of such a measure.

We discussed at length the proposed legislation in connection with the sale of seeds, and gave full consideration to the report of a conference held some time previously between representatives of the agricultural community and of seed-merchants, in which the Department of Agriculture also took part. The Board considers that it is essential that legislation should be passed, and trusts that it will be brought before Parliament this session in order that it might be circulated amongst farmers. An Act on this subject has been passed in Australia.

We were advised by Dr. Reakes that the Department did not intend to go on with the Fertilizers Bill as drafted, and which had already been submitted to us, but that it was proposed to bring in a Bill amending the present Act so as to make it a little more workable on the technical points of chemistry. We fully concur that the introduction of such legislation is necessary.

#### RURAL EDUCATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

The question of rural education and the establishment of an agricultural college was discussed by us, and it was decided that inquiries should be made with regard to the various legacies that have been bequeathed for the purpose of encouraging agricultural education. The bequests of the late Sir John Logan Campbell, Josiah Howard, and others were mentioned. It was resolved, "That the time has arrived when the preliminary steps should be taken to establish one or more farm schools in the North Island, which eventually would be paid for out of the different legacies which have been bequeathed for that purpose." The Board thinks that sketch-plans should be prepared for the buildings necessary for a school for fifty pupils, and submitted, together with an estimate of the cost, to the Board for consideration.

#### FREIGHT RATES ON STUD STOCK EXPORTED TO SOUTH AMERICA.

We have also given attention to the question of freight rates for stud stock to South American ports. Dr. Reakes reported that the Department had some time since approached the overseas shipping lines with a view of obtaining reductions in the freight rates on purebred stock, and this had resulted in the companies agreeing to carry sheep to Montevideo at six guineas net per head, with a minimum freight of £200; and cattle at £30 per head for the first five, £25 for the second, and all over ten at £20 each. It was thought that the export of purebred stock would be very much facilitated if the shipping companies could see their way to still further reduce these charges, and to strike out the condition with regard to the minimum freight of £200, which might prevent small shippers sending away stock. We requested Dr. Reakes to communicate with the shipping

companies urging them to do something in this direction, and passed the following resolution : “ That the Board of Agriculture would urge upon shipping companies the desirableness of reducing the freight rates on purebred live-stock exported, especially to South America.” It is gratifying to know that a vessel has been arranged for, and space for at least two hundred sheep has already been booked.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

The following are amongst some of the other matters dealt with : Importation of game birds into New Zealand ; spread of cattle-tick, and cattle-tick regulations ; conference of departmental Instructors in Agriculture with Cawthron Institute officials ; secondary education in relation to the professional and commercial side as against the training of country boys in agriculture ; sowing or planting of foreign seeds or plants in Tongariro National Park ; killing-rates, freight, &c., on fat stock ; use of lighter-gauge wire in fencing ; extension of Agricultural Instruction Branch of Department of Agriculture ; soil-survey ; experiments in use of Nauru/Ocean Island phosphate ; use of rabbit-traps ; earmarking scheme ; and Animals Protection and Game Act, 1921, and regulations as to opossums.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WILSON,

President of the Board.

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