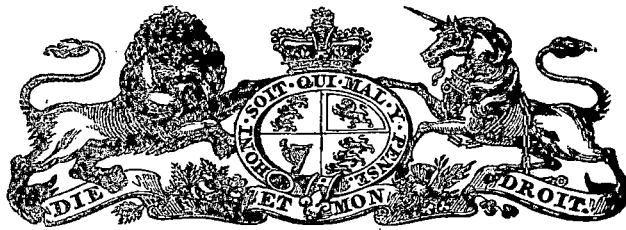


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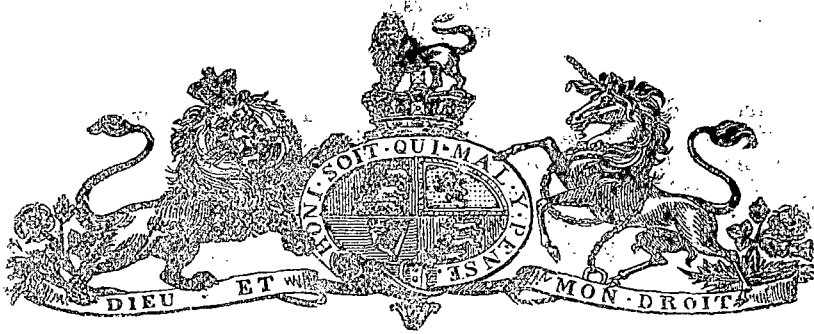
1894.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE:

INTERIM REPORT.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE.

INTERIM REPORT.

SIR,

IN response to your request for the Annual Report of the Council of Agriculture for the year 1893, "in view of the early meeting of Parliament," the following brief summary of the work of the Council is presented :—

The Agricultural year, beginning, say, on April 1 and ending on March 31, it would be better perhaps that the Annual Report of the Council should cover that period, but, as "The Council of Agriculture Act, 1891," 53 Vict. No. 43, provides that the Council should continue in office until June 30 of every second year, the Council has considered it desirable that the Reports should cover the period between June in one year and July in the next. Since the last Report was made, six new branches have been established, viz., Bream Creek, Chudleigh, Bagdad, Bismarck, Kingborough, and Old Beach. The Boards show an increasing interest in the work, with one or two exceptions, and some valuable and interesting discussions take place from time to time. The total membership amounts to 715. Each member may be said to be in touch with the Department, and, whilst there have been a few defections, the number of new members added more than counterbalance.

The Travelling Dairy has continued its tour through the country, and since the last Report has worked at 16 places. At every point it has aroused much interest, and in several places efforts are being made to form Dairying Companies as was done in the north of the Island. There are only a few more places to visit, and it is expected that its work will be completed next month.

Experiments have been made with mixtures of grasses in order to provide better pasturage for dairy and other stock. These experiments have been entrusted to the branches, and some 60 plots are being noted and cared for. So also with wheat, and, in addition, the well-planned plots which Mr. Frank Maddox has under his control at Eastfield, Newnham, have attracted a great deal of attention. It is yet too early to give the results of these experiments.

With a view to curtailing the damage done to orchards by the disease known as "Black Spot," (*Fusicladium dendriticum*), several experiments were made in different orchards by the Government Entomologist with various solutions used as sprays. Careful observation and consideration has led to the planning of experiments with various manures, as it is believed that the disease is largely due to soil exhaustion. These experiments will be put in hand at once.

A re-issue of Bulletin No. 2 on Modern Dairying was found necessary, and opportunity was taken to revise and enlarge it; two Weather and Crop Bulletins have been printed and circulated, and a Bulletin on Manures and Manuring is now in the press.

The Council recommended the imposition of a licence fee upon stallions and bulls, with the proviso that the money derived therefrom should be handed over to Agricultural Societies for distribution as prizes for horses and cattle. The recommendation was endorsed by the majority of the Council's branches, and if carried into law would, it is confidently believed, have a good effect.

With a view to preparing an exhibit which should show to visitors to the International Exhibition, to be opened in Hobart at the end of the present year, what the agricultural capabilities of the Colony are, the Council asked for a special vote of £100. It is to be regretted that the harvest has passed away before the money has been granted, as it will be much more difficult to get together a really representative collection now. The Council feels that a paltry exhibit would only bring ridicule upon the Department, and that unless the funds are provided to enable the Department to make a good show, the representation of Agriculture may better be left to the chances of private exhibits.

Very many matters of direct interest to the Colony from an agricultural or producing standpoint have been considered, and have formed the subject of preliminary enquiry. Sugar beet culture, a more scientific method of handling our timbers, the introduction of fodder plants, the better handling of pig products, &c., have all been under consideration, and will be dealt with in due course. Efforts have been made to secure direct shipment of Tasmanian products to London and other English ports, and fair promises of success are to be noted.

A Congress of Boards from fruit-growing districts was held at Hobart last September. It was attended by 24 delegates, representing 10 Boards. Two days were spent in discussing matters of interest to fruit-growers, and a deputation waited upon the Hon. the Treasurer, with the result that the Minister promised to advance the sum of £300 for the purpose of fitting up the s.s. *Port Pirie* to carry a cargo of fruit home. The proposed arrangement could not be carried out, as the fruit agents could not agree to take the responsibility of guaranteeing the freight. It is to be regretted that the season seems likely to pass without any experiment being made.

The Entomologist has been kept very busy investigating and lecturing throughout the year, and he is now about to demonstrate the uses of a Fruit Evaporator, one having been obtained for that purpose.

On February 1st the Council was provided with ample office accommodation, and a start will now be made with an Agricultural Museum.

The Council points with some gratification to the advance made in Dairying, by which the Colony has not only made a start to export butter to England, but has sent a no less quantity than 80 tons during the season. Space for 310 tons is being applied for to meet the requirements of next season. Efforts are being made to have the export boxes made of Tasmanian wood: stringybark, swamp-gum, myrtle, sassafras, and white wattle boxes are being put together for test purposes by sawmillers. If this can be done, slight help will be afforded our languishing timber industry, as upwards of 13,000 will be required for next season.

Respectfully submitted,

W. E. SHOBRIDGE, *President.*

F. W. J. MOORE, *Secretary.*

March 1, 1894.

The Hon. the Treasurer.