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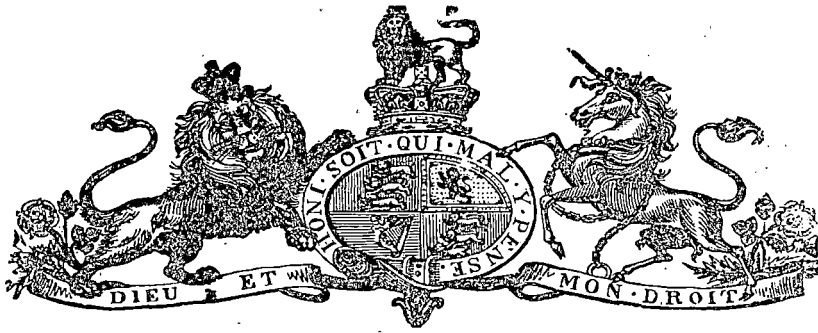
1893.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

CALIFORNIAN THISTLE ACT, 1883 :

REPORT BY CHIEF INSPECTOR.

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



THE CALIFORNIAN THISTLE ACT, 1883.

REPORT BY CHIEF INSPECTOR.

Office of Inspector of Stock, Hobart, 30th June, 1893.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to furnish you with my Report upon the working of the Californian Thistle Act for the past season 1892 and 1893 up to date.

Great difficulty has been experienced in causing this noxious weed to be cut before blossoming, many farmers preferring to be fined rather than to cut thistles among the growing crop, particularly as they believe that mere nominal penalties will be inflicted for such an offence. Others who have large areas turn sheep upon the land to eat the blossom as it appears, thus keeping within the limit of the law, but these do not aim at extermination.

The district under the supervision of the Richmond Inspector is exceptionally difficult to work, owing to the extent of country that has to be travelled and its badly infested state. Knowing this to be the case, I applied to the Warden of the Sorell Municipality for assistance, but without avail. The following letters will fully explain the application and refusal:—

Office of Inspector of Stock, Hobart, 7th February, 1893.

SIR,

I have the honor to request that you will allow Sub-Inspector Newitt to assist the Inspector under this Department in carrying out the provisions of the Californian Thistle Act in the Sorell District. What would be required of him would be (where travelling through the District on his ordinary duties when he sees thistles in blossom) to take some of the blooms and report the matter to Mr. Wilson, the District Inspector, who would lay an information, and call Sub-Inspector Newitt to give evidence.

The Commissioner of Police gives this Department great assistance in this way in the districts under his control. Mr. Wilson's district is very extensive, and any assistance that can be given in this way by your Sub-Inspector would be greatly appreciated.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. W. HENWOOD, *Esq.*, Warden, Sorell.

THOMAS A. TABART, *Chief Inspector.*

Municipal Chambers, Sorell, 15th February, 1893.

SIR,

The Members of the Sorell Municipal Council, who were all present to-day, have had your letter of the 7th laid before them, and decided that, owing to the numerous duties devolving on Sub-Inspector Newitt, and the reduced rate of pay to which the Police have had to submit, that the Council cannot direct Sub-Inspector Newitt to undertake the duties for which you ask his assistance.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Chief Inspector of Stock, Hobart.

W. W. HENWOOD, *Warden.*

Without wishing in any way to reflect upon the action of the Council, I consider that, no matter under whatever authority the Police perform duty, they should report to the official head the infringement of any Act upon the Statutes. The action of this Municipal Body demonstrates the fact that it is not desirable to have the power of enforcing any law for the suppression of pests under the control of local bodies, when naturally individual interests will arise and interfere. As the law now stands, the object to be attained—viz., the prevention of the spread of Californian thistles—is as distant from completion as ever.

Eradication, or even the chance of confining the infested land to its present area, is not the primary object of the landowner. He demands and draws as high a rent as is possible from the

tenant, who in turn naturally cultivates every available rod of land that will produce grain or roots, no matter if infested or otherwise, to enable him to pay rent and make a profit, if possible. This action causes patches of thistles to be ploughed through annually and the roots harrowed over clean land. Hence it is that the area is extending, and the value of farms infested with thistles depreciated. Instances have lately been before the Department that such is the fact. With great difficulty tenants have been secured to occupy badly infested farms at greatly reduced rents, and owned by men who will not assist the tenant, but by their overweening anxiety to obtain the highest rents possible, practically encourage the spread of the thistle, and then complain that the Act does not effect the object for which it was passed.

I have in previous Reports drawn attention to the above facts, and must again bring under your notice a scheme I consider will prevent the spread, and compel owners and tenants to interest themselves in the eradication of the weed.

MEMO. proposed Amendments in " Californian Thistle Act," 47 Vict. No. 17.

I BEG to suggest that clauses be inserted with the view to exterminate the Californian Thistle. The following is an outline of the proposal; viz.—

An owner or occupier shall have issued to him an order or licence to destroy all thistles upon his property within two seasons, without payment of any fees.

The order or licence to date from 1st September, and end on 31st May following.

Failing to destroy the thistles within the required time,—viz., two years,—an order or licence shall be issued for one season, at the following rate:—

	s.	d.
For patches (on any one farm) up to $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre	14	0
" " " from $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre not to exceed 1 acre.....	10	0
" " " from 1 acre and not to exceed 5, per acre.....	6	0
" " " from 5 acres and upwards, per acre.....	3	0

The destruction not being then attained, a renewed order or licence shall be issued for one more season, at the same rates as those named above. If a further renewal is required the rate shall be increased as under:—

	£.	s.	d.
For patches (on any one farm) up to $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre	1	1	0
" " " from $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre and not to exceed 1 acre	0	15	0
" " " from 1 acre and not to exceed 5, per acre	0	7	6
" " " from 5 acres and upwards, per acre.....	0	3	9

Renewals of order or licence will be issued for one more season at the above rates.

If a further renewal is required, the above rates to be increased 50 per cent. for the two first named areas, and 25 per cent. for the two last named—and so to be increased every two seasons. Seeing the great benefit that owners of infected properties would derive from the extermination of the Californian Thistle by increased value of the land and rents, I submit that the owners of such properties shall contribute three-fourths of the cost of exterminating the Thistles, and the tenant one-quarter of the cost, and that the same proportion be paid by owner and tenant for licence fee.

In submitting this scheme, I do so with the knowledge that the Californian Thistle can be eradicated by the exhaustion process, but it requires constant and careful attention during the summer months,—this is essential. Upon small patches systematic hoeing should be adopted so as not to permit the leaf of the thistle to even appear above the ground. Over large areas an implement known as a shaver can be run through the patches in the early summer at least twice a week, and as the season advances the period can be extended; the harrows should also be worked in conjunction. It is all important that the process be not neglected, otherwise it is labour and money wasted. With action as indicated few thistles will appear after the first season, and those that are alive will be weakly plants and easily killed with a hoe and salt. This operation may appear costly, but it is a reproductive work, increasing as it will the value of the land that was once infested, besides being a thorough summer fallow, and must, with a favourable season following, be remunerative to the farmer for his labour. Tenants operating in this way upon land should receive assistance from the owner, who is materially benefited.

I have again to record my appreciation of the manner in which Inspectors have performed their duties under this Act, and also the services rendered by the Territorial Police.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

The Honorable the Chief Secretary.

THOMAS A. TABART, *Chief Inspector.*