

(No. 49.)



1890.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

C O D L I N M O T H A C T :

REPORT OF CHIEF INSPECTOR.

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



CODLIN MOTH ACT.

REPORT of Chief Inspector for the Season 1888-89.

I HAVE the honor to furnish my Annual Report upon the working of "The Codlin Moth Act" up to 30th May, 1890.

I regret to inform you that there is little diminution in the pest to record from the working of the Act for the last 12 months. It is only in orchards where the fruit last season was entirely removed and destroyed before the grub was allowed to escape that its presence is now unknown, thus bearing out the principle expressed by me, when making my first report, as follows:—

"Viewing the ravages committed by this pest, it is a question requiring very grave consideration if it will not be advisable, and an ultimate benefit to orchardists, to attack the grub before it leaves the fruit. The delay in picking infected fruit allows the grub to escape and hide in winter quarters, taking refuge in old buildings, fences, hedges, also in the rubbish and long grass which is found, I am sorry to say, in numberless neglected gardens. Consequently the moth in the following season again causes destruction and loss to the fruitgrowers, when the grub should have been destroyed in and with the fruit of the previous season."

I am more convinced than ever, from carefully observing the work performed under the present system, that no direct or indirect benefit will accrue to the fruitgrower in the way of ridding him of or subduing the Codlin Moth pest.

It is indispensable that uniform action should exist throughout all Fruit Districts, and that the provisions of the Act should be stringently enforced. This, I emphatically assert, is the exception under Board supervision. The provisions of the Act and Regulations relating to picking [and destroying infected fruit are disregarded, as also is the universal bandaging of trees, which is essential for the destruction of the grub. Hence it is evident that until the law is administered from a central authority "The Codlin Moth Act" will continue an expense to fruitgrowers, who will not receive an equivalent return for their outlay.

The failure and fallacy of a system under which interested bodies control the appointment of Inspectors, and attempt to enforce the provisions of this Act, have been too clearly exemplified. It is an established fact that members of some Boards will protect, and have protected, their individual interests, by preventing informations being laid and the law allowed to take its course, when the offender is a member of their own body.

With the knowledge of these proceedings before me, I unhesitatingly affirm that the Board system is a lamentable failure, and that centralisation should be effected as soon as possible, so that the fruit-producing interest should be efficiently protected. This I have pointed out in my letter addressed to you on the subject of the 24th April, 1890.

The importance of amending the present Codlin Moth Act is one very essential point to be considered when Parliament is in session. The present Act is defective, and requires alteration. At a meeting held at the Town Hall in June, 1889, when members from a majority of the Boards were present, the provisions of the Codlin Moth Act were carefully gone through *seriatim*

Alterations, where desirable, were recommended, and in due course submitted to Parliament. Hon. Members in the House declined to accept the suggestions of members of Boards who were practically acquainted with defective clauses wherein offenders could escape justice. Hence the Act of 1888 remains on the Statute Book. It is to be hoped that when Parliament is again assembled, the development of the fruit industry and the protection of growers will receive the serious consideration of the Government and Members, which may result in a thorough amendment of the Act.

The methods adopted for decreasing the pest have not been carried out with any uniform system. Therefore, the action of careful fruitgrowers has been nullified by the carelessness of negligent owners, who will not in many cases conform to the regulations, so that simultaneous action is wanting to affirm success. If the picking of fruit in towns and infected orchards were made compulsory, much good would result.

From information received from all practical sources, and from my own observations, I favour this as the only method of ultimate eradication. I have annually drawn attention to the manner in which the grub is conveyed from place to place,—viz., in the chrysalis state, in old and return fruit cases, which, with bags, must be the agent for infecting orchards now declared clean. I am privileged to report from Mr. James, of the Tea Tree, whose previously clean orchard was infected by placing in it cases which he brought from Hobart containing fruit for use. Mr. James picked the whole of the fruit in his orchard when he first noticed the infected fruit. This season both Mr. James and the Inspector report the orchard clean. This example shows how the grub is conveyed, and also the efficacy of picking and destroying the fruit in the early stages. If the immersion of all fruit-cases were made compulsory before leaving Hobart the steady extension of the grub would be decreased. One of the most serious questions to be dealt with is the increase of orchard pests. Several now in existence are quite new to the Colony, and their destructive propensities have not been determined. In my letter to you, bearing date 30th December, 1889, I suggested the employment of an entomologist, and named the Curator of the Botanical Gardens as the gentleman most fitted in my opinion to undertake the duty. The importation and employment of an American entomologist has also been suggested. This I do not favour, the conditions of the two countries being entirely different. Again, with all the American knowledge, have they reduced or prevented the extension of the pest? If they have reduced it, the means adopted has been the exportation of infected fruit to Tasmania and other countries. This is beyond dispute, for only as recently as November last Mr. Hall, the then Hobart Inspector, developed the Codlin Moth from a chrysalis found in apple-packing imported from America. With such an example before us, I strongly recommend to the serious consideration of the Government the necessity of prohibiting the importation of foreign fruit.

I must revert to the employment of an American entomologist which has been suggested. With such an appointment arises the question of the amount of remuneration, and whence are to come the funds? It is patent that fruitgrowers must bear the cost, as sheepowners have done to eradicate scab, and stockowners are now doing to deal with the rabbit incursion. I think it unjust that the Consolidated Revenue should be called upon to contribute, as one special industry is not entitled to advantages which have been persistently refused another, viz., stockowners, who have completed their work of scab eradication at a cost of about £50,000 without a farthing of Government aid, and are now contributing for the destruction of rabbits.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

THOMAS A. TABART, *Chief Inspector.*

The Honorable the Treasurer.
3 June, 1890.

SINCE compiling this Report, I am pleased to find that the Rev. A. H. Thompson, of Franklin, has, with your consent, taken up the subject of insect pests, and intends tabulating and supplying all available information concerning them.

His idea is to obtain replies to a series of questions put to practical men, with a view of increasing our stock of knowledge, and thus to enable these pests to be more successfully dealt with.

This will doubtless prove a step in the right direction, and I think Mr. Thompson is deserving of the thanks of the community and the hearty co-operation of orchardists in the honorary work he has undertaken.

THOMAS A. TABART, *Chief Inspector.*

TABLE showing Acreage of Orchards for 1888-89 and 1889-90, as returned by the various Boards.

DISTRICT.	Acreage.			
	1888-89.	1889-90.	Increase.	Decrease.
Brighton and Richmond.....	679	710	31	
Circular Head.....	105	99	...	6
Cumberland.....	171	164	...	7
Devon, West	295	309	14	
Fingal	96	99	3	
Franklin	691	730	39	
Glenorchy	1216	1216		
George Town	227	215*	...	12
Glamorgan.....	223	224	1	
Gordon.....	277	260	...	17
Hobart.....	759	600*	...	159
Huon, North	488	653	165	
„ Upper.....	267	268	1	
„ Central.....	448	470	22	
„ South.....	114	139	25	
Longford.....	1294	821	...	473
Longley	103	106	3	
Launceston	799	815	16	
Mersey.....	421	476	55	
Midland.....	254	291	37	
New Norfolk	1040	1134	94	
North West Bay.....	163	165	2	
Port Cygnet.....	694	710	16	
Queenborough.....	554	531	...	23
Ringarooma.....	206	207	1	
† Spring Bay	110			
Sorell	419	429	10	
Tasman's Peninsula.....	125	151	26	
Wellington.....	175	176	1	
Westbury and Deloraine.....	568	556	...	12

* Approximate.

† No return to hand.