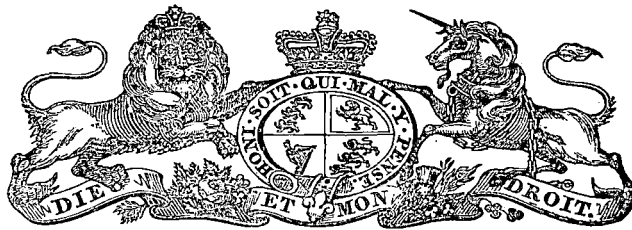


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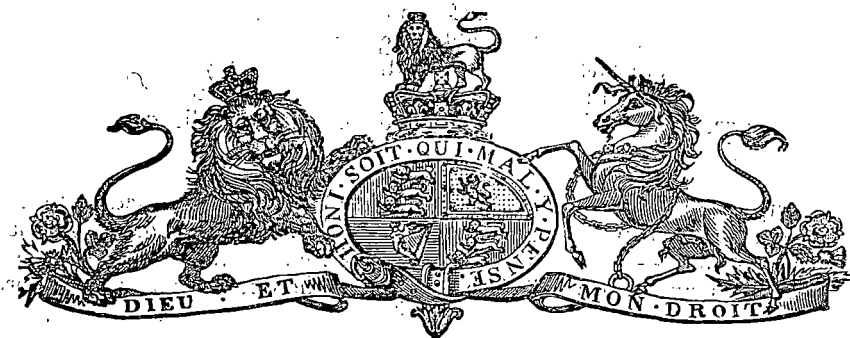
1888.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

CALIFORNIAN THISTLE ACT:

REPORT BY CHIEF INSPECTOR FOR THE YEAR ENDING
JUNE 30, 1888.

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



CALIFORNIAN THISTLE ACT.

REPORT by CHIEF INSPECTOR for the Year ending 30th June, 1888.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to furnish a Report upon the working of the Californian Thistle Act for the season of 1887 and 1888.

There is little to add to the information already furnished in my previous Reports upon this noxious weed. I still continue to hold the opinion expressed by me that the most successful mode of treating the pest for its destruction is constant and good cultivation, more particularly as it has proved to be both effective and reproductive: the cultivation of the land acting as a partial fallow invariably produces payable crops, especially when assisted by a favourable season. I may mention, for the information of those suffering from this curse, the successful efforts made by Mr. Ellis, of Berriedale. He operated upon ten acres of land that were thickly infested with Californian thistles. He commenced by ploughing up the land late in the winter, and kept the soil moving throughout the spring and summer months. In March he sowed the land for a hay crop, and was rewarded for his industry and perseverance by harvesting three tons of hay to the acre, and also had the satisfaction of absolutely destroying the thistles. So impressed is he with his success, that he intends to operate this season upon a much larger area, and hopes eventually to clean his farm from all Californian thistles.

Great good has resulted from the importation, made by Mr. Harding, of the Government Farm, into Tasmania of the combined scarifier and shaver. Numbers of similar instruments are now being used with great success in destroying Californian thistles.

In looking over the list of fines for the past season, it will be seen that the district containing the largest area of Californian thistles significantly monopolises the enviable position of having therein imposed the most lenient fines for breaches of the law. I am led to believe this will not occur in the future. You will also observe that there is a decrease in the number of prosecutions: I am strongly of opinion that it is attributable to the substantial penalties inflicted by the Bench of Magistrates presiding at Hobart, whose action has been taken as a caution by those who unfortunately have Californian thistles upon their land not to infringe the law; hence greater care has been exercised to comply with the Act.

I have given special instructions to Inspectors appointed under the Act, and have also addressed a communication to the Inspector of Police requesting that all the officers under him be instructed to destroy Bathurst Burr found growing in their respective districts. This has been carefully

attended to. The importation of sheep from Victoria has caused this plant to extend upon the North Coast of Tasmania, particularly upon the road leading from Formby to Latrobe, to which latter place most of the fat sheep are driven after being dipped, and from thence trucked to the Hobart market.

Mr. A. N. Pearson, Agricultural Chemist of Victoria, has been good enough to furnish me with his Report on "How to exterminate the Californian Thistle." No new theory is put forward, but great weight is evidently attached to the method of using underground implements to cut off the thistle before it makes its appearance above the ground. This is the process I have strongly recommended in all my Reports, and I firmly believe it is the best known method to reduce and finally eradicate the pest. Mr. Pearson remarks as to the cost of this method:—"The Tasmanian shaver, with two horses and a man, has been able to go over eight acres a day. The cost would be, therefore, about 1s. 6d. per acre each time; and as during the first year the ground would have to be hoed 25 times, the cost during the year would be roughly 35s. to 40s. an acre. During the second and third years crops would be obtainable, and the cost of eradication would be set down to expenses of cultivation."

Observations upon the use of chemicals will no doubt be instructive to those who have Californian Thistles upon the banks of creeks, stony ground, at the sides of roads, under fences, and about old timber and stumps:—"So far as has been found, late in the autumn is the best season in which to apply chemicals, and that it is little use applying them in the spring. According to reports received from Bungaree, by the application of chloride of lime in the late autumn, at the rate of 12 cwts. to the acre, the thistles were prevented from making their appearance during the whole of the following season; but it appears that in the third season they began to grow again, indicating that a second application of chloride of lime should be given during the second autumn."

Three inspectors are appointed to see that the provisions of this Act are enforced, at a remuneration of 12s. per working day. Out of this sum they have to provide their own horse and forage, shoeing, and travelling expenses. I must, in justice to these officers, again apply for an increase in their salaries to 15s. per working day. These gentlemen are most efficient, and have given me much satisfaction in the discharge of their, at times, most unpleasant duty, and respectfully request that their services may receive recognition by the Government.

Herewith I beg to show the number of convictions under different penalties. Also total number of convictions for the year 1886-7:—

Districts.	1s.	2s 6d	5s.	10s.	15s.	£1	£1 5s	£1 10s.	£2	£3	Number of Convictions	Average Penalty.
New Norfolk	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	2	£ s. d. 0 15 0
Brighton	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	4	0 15 0
Clarence	2	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	0 2 9½
Glenorchy	2	...	5	...	...	4	...	11	1 5 5½
Richmond	2	...	...	...	...	2	1 0 0
Green Ponds	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	0 2 6
Huon	6	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	7	0 7 1½
Hobart	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	3	0 10 0
Port Sorell	1	...	...	...	...	1	1 0 0
Sorell	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	0 5 0
	2	4	11	5	—	13	—	—	4	—	39	—

Compare fines 1887-8 with above table.

Districts.	2s 6d	5s.	10s.	15s.	£1	£1 1s	£1 5s	£2	£5	Number of Convictions	Average Penalty.
New Norfolk .....	...	3	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	5	£ s. d. 0 15 0
Brighton	1	1	...	...	2	...	...	1	1	6	1 11 3
Clarence	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	0 3 9
Glenorchy .....	...	1	1	1	4	...	...	1	...	8	0 18 9
Bothwell .....	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	0 10 0
Huon .....	...	3	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	4	0 8 9
Hobart .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	5 0 0
	2	9	4	1	8	—	—	3	3	29	—

The following particulars show the estimated area of Californian Thistles in Tasmania, as furnished by the Inspectors; also the infested districts. It will be noticed that there is an increased acreage:—

<i>District.</i>	<i>Properties,</i> 1886-7.	<i>Area, 1886-7.</i>		<i>Properties,</i> 1887-8.	<i>Area, 1887-8.</i>	
		<i>Acres.</i>	<i>Rods.</i>		<i>Acres.</i>	<i>Rods.</i>
Westbury	2	3	3	3	3	13
Oatlands	15	12	0	14	9	14
Glamorgan	6	2	0	6	1	8
Spring Bay	3	1	0	2	0	87
Sorell	42	21	40	42	27	33
New Norfolk	53	155	0	44	172	3
Brighton	94	375	70	102	541	74
Clarence	57	844	25	57	871	134
Glenorchy	72	392	2	68	416	2
New Town & Queenborough...	64	6	0	64	72	3
Richmond	63	64	36	63	51	83
Green Ponds	19	23	0	23	10	106
Bothwell	11	9	40	11	25	94
Hamilton	2	1	0	2	1	0
Deloraine	1	0	12	3	0	122
Port Sorell	3	5	3	3	8	80
Huon	45	67	0	53	157	108
Selby	1	0	20	1	0	20
Kingborough	8	2	0	8	0	3
George Town	1	0	5	1	0	5
TOTAL	562	1983	96	570	2370	32

In conclusion, I consider it most important that a Noxious Weed or a Pest Act should become law, with power given to frame Regulations so as to prevent any further addition to the already long list of objectionable importations of foreign weeds or insects; the exclusion of the most important being the Hessian Fly, which has already established itself in New Zealand.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

THOMAS A. TABART, *Chief Inspector.*

The Honorable the Chief Secretary.