

(No. 42.)



1875.

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

EXPORTATION OF SHEEP.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF VICTORIA.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Chapman, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
August 10, 1875.



TELEGRAM.

Melbourne, 18: 5. 75.

Time, 11.44.

NATIONAL Agricultural Society of Victoria bring under our notice the prevalence of scab in a virulent form in Tasmania; and as Victoria may now be almost considered clean, it is urged upon the Government to prohibit importation of sheep from Tasmania. We propose to issue proclamation accordingly.

(Signed) G. B. KERFERD.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Tasmania.

TELEGRAM.

Hobart Town, 18th May, 1875, 5 P.M.

You need not be under any alarm about the report which has reached you respecting an outbreak of scab in Tasmania.

Our Chief Inspector received a report from Carrick, near Launceston, last week, that a few sheep were found scabby in a small flock, and he had them immediately destroyed.

I will send you a full report on the case, and write, by next steamer; meanwhile this Government trusts you will not consider it expedient to issue any Proclamation prohibiting the importation of sheep from Tasmania into Victoria.

(Signed) THOS. D. CHAPMAN, *Colonial Secretary.*

The Chief Secretary, Victoria.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 18th. May, 1875.

MY DEAR MR. WHYTE,

HEREWITH I send you a copy of a telegram I have just received from the Chief Secretary in Victoria, with a copy of my telegram in reply.

Will you be good enough to send me an official report by return of post for me to forward by the next mail for Melbourne, which will be made up on Thursday evening, and forwarded to Launceston by that night's mail for transmission to Melbourne by the *Derwent*, advertised to leave Launceston on Friday next at noon?

I sincerely trust that the Victorian Government will not issue any Proclamation prohibiting the importation of sheep from this Colony, as such a Proclamation would be most injurious to our friends engaged in breeding and exporting stud sheep.

I am, my dear Mr. Whyte,
Yours very truly,

THOS. D. CHAPMAN.

The Hon. JAMES WHYTE, Tunbridge.

Ballochmyle, Tunbridge, 19th May, 1875.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date conveying copy of a telegram you had received from the Chief Secretary of Victoria, intimating the intention of his Government to issue a Proclamation prohibiting the importation of Tasmanian sheep on account of certain representations of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria to the effect that "scab prevails in a virulent form in Tasmania;" and that, "as Victoria may now be almost considered clean, it is urged upon the Government to prohibit importation of sheep from Tasmania," and they intimate their "intention to issue a Proclamation accordingly."

I am also in receipt of a copy of your reply to the Victorian Chief Secretary's telegram, in which you inform him that a small flock of infected sheep had been found at Carrick, and I had had them destroyed immediately.

I presume the action of the National Agricultural Society of Victoria has been caused by certain groundless reports which appeared in the *Australasian* and other Victorian papers to the effect that "scab in a virulent form—whatever that may mean!—had broken out in Tasmania in several Clean Sheep Districts."

As a matter of fact the reports referred to are untrue, and about a week ago I wrote a letter, addressed to the Editor of the *Australasian*, contradicting them, which I suppose will appear in the next issue of that paper. I also authorised Mr. Fletcher, one of the Inspectors in the North, to contradict the reports which appeared in the *Australasian* and other papers, in order to satisfy the minds of sheepowners in the northern districts, to which, it appears, these false reports more particularly applied; and that was done in a letter which appeared in the *Cornwall Chronicle* of the 14th instant.

It certainly appears to me that the Victorian Government have been somewhat hasty in acting on the representations of the National Agricultural Association of Victoria (but which, after all, can only be a few gentlemen in and around Melbourne who form a portion of the Executive body of the Society) based upon mere newspaper reports, without in the first place applying to the Government here in order to ascertain if the reported outbreaks of scab in clean districts had taken place as alleged.

I am now preparing my Annual Report on the condition of the Tasmanian sheep, which will be ready some time in June. It will bring the returns up to the 1st of that month as usual, and will, I believe, satisfactorily demonstrate to the Government that the eradication of the scab disease in sheep is rapidly approaching its completion.

If the Victorian Government on such grounds as those alleged carry out their expressed determination, the consequences to stud sheep breeders in this Colony will be most disastrous. Moreover, it will not only be most unnecessary on sanitary grounds, but it will be a breach of faith with this Colony, inasmuch as the resolutions and suggestions of the Conference of Inspectors at Sydney, to which the Victorian Government requested the Tasmanian Government to assent, do not contemplate the prohibition of importations of sheep from any country even in the future on account of scab disease, because it is a disease which is easily controllable by such quarantine regulations as are set forth in the Conference proceedings.

One of the reasons assigned by the Victorian National Agricultural Society, viz., that Victoria may now be "almost considered clean," is not a good reason as applied to this Colony, even if it had ever been contemplated or considered necessary at any time in the future to prohibit importations of stud sheep on account of scab. I have the last published returns of sheep under quarantine in Victoria on account of scab, and they do not show a cleaner bill of health in proportion to numbers than we have in Tasmania at the present moment.

I may add that, although we have exported stud sheep largely for the last four years to Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand, I have never heard that a single diseased sheep has been detected.

From England and from California diseased sheep have been imported during the years referred to, but not one from Tasmania, so careful have we been to secure from possible infection sheep coming from the interior to Hobart Town and Launceston for exportation to the neighbouring Colonies.

The false reports which have given rise to this correspondence I believe have been originated here by a few persons who have been all along of opinion that the scab would never be eradicated; and who, even now, in the face of facts which ought to satisfy any rational mind, still maintain their absurd opinions, and to justify themselves do not hesitate to accept the suspicions and surmises of ignorant men as established facts; and unless I am much mistaken there are a few—and I am happy

to say a very few—whose antipathies to the Scab Act are so deeply engraved on their minds by the grossest ignorance and the most unreasoning prejudice, that they permit themselves to make confident assertions of the existence of scab in localities of which they have no personal knowledge whatever. “The wish is father to the thought” with this small class, and at considerable risk of its being brought home to them one of these days, they persist in making rash and mischievous statements utterly regardless of their truth or falsity, and equally reckless of the possible consequences, as in the present instance, which may result therefrom.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

JAMES WHYTE.

The Honorable THOMAS D. CHAPMAN,
Colonial Secretary, Hobart Town.

Tasmania,
Colonial Secretary's Office, 20th May, 1875.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the following telegram from you dated the 18th instant:—

“The National Agricultural Society of Victoria bring under our notice the prevalence of scab in a virulent form in Tasmania, and as Victoria may now be almost considered clean, it is urged upon the Government to prohibit the importation of sheep from Tasmania, and we propose to issue a Proclamation accordingly.”

On receipt of which I immediately telegraphed to you as follows:—

“You need not be under any alarm about the report which has reached you respecting an outbreak of scab in Tasmania.

“Our Chief Inspector of Sheep received a report from Carrick, near Launceston, last week, that a few sheep were found scabby in a small flock, and he had them immediately destroyed.

“I will send you a full report on the case, and write you by next steamer; meanwhile this Government trusts you will not consider it expedient to issue any Proclamation prohibiting the importation of sheep from Tasmania in Victoria.”

I had the honor of receiving the following telegram from you in reply yesterday afternoon:—

“I will await your letter by next steamer.”

I have now the honor of forwarding to you a copy of a letter I received this morning from the Hon. James Whyte, our Chief Inspector of Sheep, by which you will see there is no cause for any alarm whatever on the part of your Government, or the owners and breeders of sheep in Victoria, from the reported prevalence of scab in a virulent form in Tasmania; and I trust it will thoroughly satisfy your Government that there is no necessity whatever for the issue of a Proclamation prohibiting the importation of sheep from Tasmania into your Colony.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

THOS. D. CHAPMAN.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, Victoria.