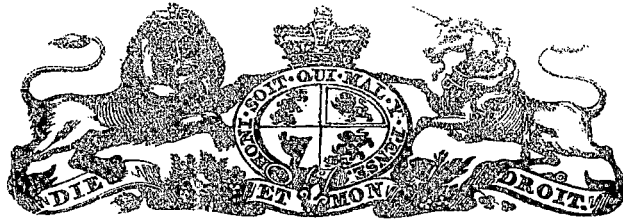


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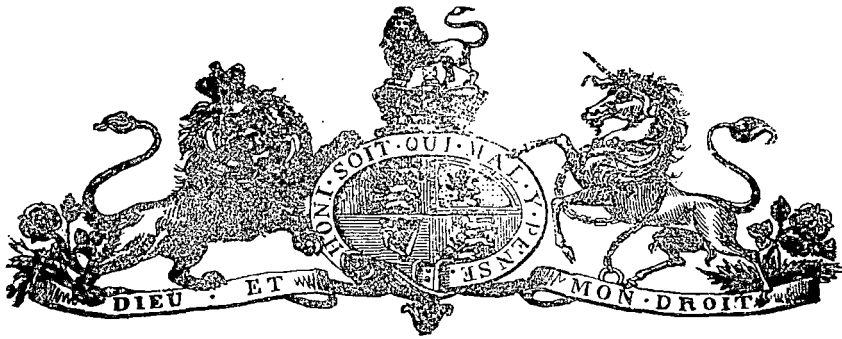
1885.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

CALIFORNIAN THISTLE ACT:

REPORT OF CHIEF INSPECTOR.

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



REPORT on the Working of "The Californian Thistle Act, 1883."

Office of Inspector of Sheep, Hobart, 17th July, 1885.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit a statement on the working of "The Californian Thistle Act," which was amalgamated with this Department in 1883 and 1884.

The Act, in its present working, is not a success, consequent upon the inadequate inspecting force and minimum fines inflicted.

For your information, I beg to report that previous to the Act being under the Sheep Department it was under the control of the Municipal authorities, who employed their Superintendents of Police, with a salary of from £10 to £15 per annum, together with half the fines (fixed at a minimum under the previous Act at £2), which in a few cases was the only remuneration they received. Consequently, as it now stands, the Southern Inspector is in reality performing the work of eight men, having the supervision of the Municipalities of Brighton, Sorell, Richmond, New Norfolk, Green Ponds, Glenorchy, Clarence, Kingborough, Huon, and Queenborough. You will see the utter impossibility of attaining the satisfactory working to the occupiers of land.

Having myself, for the past two seasons, performed this duty under the Act, I am in a position to give a practical opinion as to what is required to prevent the rapid extension of the pest.

1. Where the Californian Thistle has taken possession of large areas I would recommend that the occupiers should lay the land down in grass for stock feeding, so as not to increase the thistle by cultivation, as is the case, and will be until the landlord gives a helping hand in the shape of reduced rent to the struggling tenant on thistle-infested land.

It is impossible in cultivated land to thoroughly cut thistles from the grain crop to prevent the blossoming and the seed being disseminated from farm to farm by stock and threshing machines.

2. On small patches I would insist upon the occupier not ploughing nearer than two rods of a patch; then for his own benefit to initiate a system of extermination by hoeing the piece of land every week, and by this method, which has been a proved success, a few patches could be killed every season, thus materially enhancing the value of the property, say, by at least 25 per cent.

Mr. Joseph Barwick, one of our practical farmers at the Tea Tree, destroyed nine acres by adopting this course. Mr. C. Mathews, of Black Brush, has killed 30 patches within a very short time, and Mr. Earl, of Glenorchy, has accomplished wonders in thistle destruction. From the good results experienced, he advertises to destroy patches or large areas upon certain conditions; if he fails in the task payment is not required.

I would suggest that a minimum penalty be fixed at £1, being satisfied that with the small penalties the good which is supposed to be effected to the country is entirely vitiated by the small fines inflicted, which renders the Act almost inoperative.

A deterrent should be placed upon those who habitually allow their thistles to blossom—many having, as my experience proves, allowed the law to take its course, suffering a prosecution with a nominal fine to follow, rather than cut the thistles at a moderate outlay—thus preventing annoyance to their neighbour, who in all probability is a painstaking farmer, not allowing thistles to blossom or wishing to have his estate destroyed or deteriorated in marketable value by the presence of Californian Thistles

I have the honor to draw your attention to the convictions and fines under the Californian Thistle Act for the years 1884 and 1885.

1884.

| | £ | s. | d. |
|--|------------|----------|----------|
| 2 Convictions carrying fines at 2s. 6d. | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| 27 Ditto at 5s. | 6 | 15 | 0 |
| 2 Ditto at 10s. | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 Ditto at £1 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 Ditto at £1 5s. | 2 | 10 | 0 |
| 1 Ditto at £1 10s. | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| <u>46</u> | <u>£24</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |

1885.

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|------------|----------|----------|
| 12 Convictions carrying fines at 2s. 6d. | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| 12 Ditto at 5s. | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 Ditto at 10s. | 5 | 10 | 0 |
| 2 Ditto at £1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 Ditto at £2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| <u>39</u> | <u>£16</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |

I beg respectfully to recommend to the consideration of the Government that additional supervision be provided during the ensuing season, and would suggest that £255 be placed upon the Estimates chargeable on the Consolidated Revenue, to be utilised in the following manner—viz., for the payment of three additional Inspectors, to be employed in certain districts known to be infested with the weed, to take instructions from the Chief Inspector, their work to commence in the middle of November and terminate in the middle of April, with a remuneration of 11s. 4d. per diem. I feel certain that suitable local men could be obtained to carry out this duty efficiently.

I also attach a list of the number of properties infested with Californian Thistles, thereby making you acquainted with the extent of the pest:—

| | <i>Properties.</i> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Oatlands | 8 |
| Glamorgan | 2 |
| Spring Bay | 3 |
| Sorell | 40 |
| New Norfolk | 26 |
| Brighton | 94 |
| Clarence | 57 |
| Glenorchy | 42 |
| New Town and Queenborough | 32 |
| Richmond | 64 |
| Green Ponds | 16 |
| Norfolk Plains | 1 |
| Bothwell | 5 |
| Hamilton | 2 |
| Deloraine | 1 |
| | <u>391</u> |

Some of these infested properties above mentioned have areas of from 30 acres to half a rod in extent, and as many as 80 patches are known to be on one property. In all probability there are other infested lands unknown to Inspectors.

I have, &c.

THOMAS A. TABART, *Chief Inspector.*

The Honorable ADYE DOUGLAS, *Chief Secretary.*