

(No. 71.)



1901.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

RAT EXTERMINATION:

REPORT OF THE HOBART JOINT COMMITTEE.

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

Cost of printing.—£1 8s. 9d.



RAT EXTERMINATION.

REPORT OF THE HOBART JOINT COMMITTEE.

To the Honourable the Chief Secretary; to the Chairman and Members of the Local Board of Health of Hobart; and to the Master Warden and Wardens of the Marine Board of Hobart.

GENTLEMEN,

WE, the Members of the Joint Committee, severally appointed by you, to take the necessary measures to destroy, as far as possible, the rats in the City and Port of Hobart, have the honour to further report to you, as follows:—

On further developments of Bubonic Plague taking place, generally in the neighbouring States, and particularly in Cape Colony, we recommenced, on the 25th March, the work we had suspended on 31st October, last year. No change was made in the constitution of the Committee so far as the appointments made by the Government and the Marine Board were concerned, but the Local Board of Health nominated Mr. Alderman Paton to take the place vacated by Mr. Alderman Henry. The services of Mr. Mault, as Secretary, and Mr. Brain, as Supervisor, were again given.

In the light of the experience gained last year, we began the campaign with a smaller staff of workmen, picked from the more efficient of our old staff, and the head-money we offered for rats was reduced to that which we paid at the beginning of last year, 2*d.* a head. A special Circular prepared by the Central Board of Health, dated 19th March, 1901, on the importance of the question of Rat Destruction, was issued to every householder in Hobart. The Berthing Regulations for ships arriving from infected ports were again enforced, under the superintendence of the Harbour Master.

Generally speaking, the work was carried out in a similar manner to that of last year, but more work was done by trapping, and less poison was used. There was a great falling off in the number of rats brought in by the general public. The Corporation of Hobart again gave us the use of the Collins-street yard as a receiving place, and the Tramway Company again allowed us the use of their furnaces for burning dead rats. Throughout the year no dead rat was found showing any signs of having suffered from plague.

As the plague seemed to have passed away from the neighbouring States, and was diminishing rapidly and continuously in Cape Colony, we discontinued operations for the year on the 28th September. Up to that date, 15,878 rats had been caught and burnt, and, probably, four or five thousand more poisoned, and carried out to sea from the wharves and sewers. It will be thus seen that the deficiency arising from the slackness of the general public was more than compensated for by the efficiency of our own staff.

The expenditure, as shown by the accompanying Abstract of Accounts, has amounted to a sum about equivalent to 4½*d.* a head for each rat destroyed. The cost last year was 5*d.* a head.

At our Meeting, held on the 24th September, we had placed before us a Circular Despatch, dated 31st July, 1901, from the Right Honourable the Secretary for the Colonies, covering letters from the Local Government Board and their Medical Officer, on the best means of dealing with rats, especially

in seaport towns. We were glad to be able to point out to the Honourable the Chief Secretary, for the information of the Home Authorities, that we had been, since March, 1900, not only carrying out all the suggestions now made by the Medical Officer of the Local Government Board, but insuring the efficacy by additional precautions with regard to the lighting and watching of wharves, and of ships in port.

In conclusion, we would suggest that, for the present, our commission should be held in abeyance, so that, should the necessity arise, we could at once recommence our work. In the meantime, the stock of traps, &c., will be left in the care of the Supervisor.

We have the honour to be,
Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servants,

J. W. EVANS, *Chairman*,

T. BENNISON,

R. S. BRIGHT,

J. C. PATON,

ROBT. SNOWDEN,

WM. J. WATCHORN.

A. MAULT, *Secretary*,
Hobart, 8th October, 1901.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS, HOBART RAT EXTERMINATION COMMITTEE.

| DR. | | | CR. | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1901. | £ | s. d. | 1901. | £ | s. d. |
| To Treasury | 120 | 13 6 | By Wages and Payments for services | 204 | 6 8 |
| Local Board of Health | 120 | 13 6 | Payments for Rats | 132 | 2 2 |
| Hobart Marine Board | 120 | 13 6 | Poison, Traps, Implements, &c. | 15 | 4 7 |
| Unclaimed Rat Money..... | 0 | 13 10 | Printing, Advertising, and petty Expenses | 11 | 0 1 |
| | | | | | |
| | <u>£362</u> | <u>14 4</u> | | <u>£362</u> | <u>14 4</u> |