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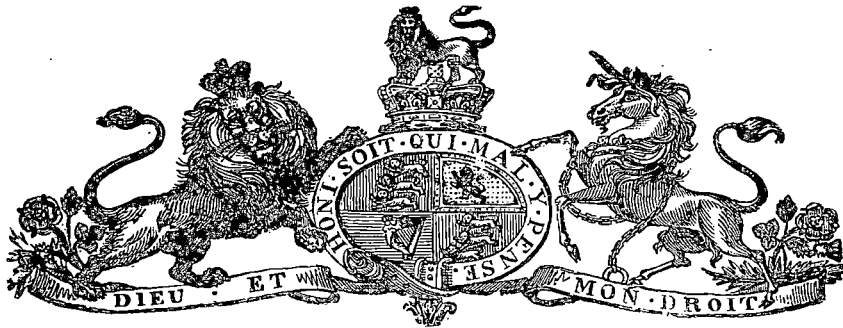
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

REPORT BY CHIEF INSPECTOR

On the working of the Stock, Rabbit Destruction, Vegetation Diseases,
and Codlin Moth Acts, for the Year 1900-1901.

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

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Stock Branch, Hobart, 30th June, 1901.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to place before you my annual report for the year 1901, under the Stock, Rabbit Destruction, Vegetable Diseases, and Codlin Moth Acts.

Tasmania still remains free from scab in sheep, and, so long as the quarantine laws are enforced, which compel the dipping in quarantine of all sheep imported from outside inter-State ports, no risk is to be apprehended from the introduction of scab.

Quarantine Regulations upon Stock.—The regulations which prohibit all stock from Queensland and upon swine from New Zealand, being admitted into Tasmania have been renewed. During the past session of Parliament, a resolution was proposed by a member from one of the districts that were anxious to reduce the period of quarantine upon cattle from Australasia. This was passed, and, as a result, regulations have been issued. It is a matter for congratulation that this vexed question has been so satisfactorily settled, and that those voting for the resolution were seized with the importance of limiting to a proper period of probable likelihood of infectious and contagious diseases being introduced to Tasmanian stock by contact with cattle from an Australasian State to three years. It provides for cattle carrying a certificate from the breeder and the Chief Inspector of Stock from the exporting State that the herds have been free from contagious or infectious disease for three years. If so provided, the owners of the cattle imported are not subjected to any charges for quarantine fees or fodder during detention at the Quarantine Station.

The passing of the resolution gives greater security than ever before existed upon the introduction of stock from Australasian States, covering, as it does, by certificate, a period of freedom from disease for three years prior to exportation from a State, and six months' detention at the Quarantine Station within the importing State. This, I believe, will provide perfect safety. I am most gratified that the agitation for the reduction of quarantine periods has been so satisfactorily settled by those who worked for the modification of quarantine to three months from Australasian States, and that they have favourably considered the importance of immunity from disease, and fixed a minimum date from which to calculate when the transportation of cattle from a herd and from a State wherein cattle are diseased, can be safely undertaken into a clean State. Last session of Parliament was also responsible for passing a short Act, increasing the quarantine upon cattle from New Zealand from thirty days to three months. This was consequent upon New Zealand reducing its quarantine term upon cattle from Australasian States from ninety days to forty days, which period I reported to you I deemed quite inadequate. Herewith I append my report upon the introduction of cattle from the State of Victoria suffering from Warbles, also that of Dr. Willmot, M.R.C.V.S. I have entered my protest against a repetition of such action by the authorities of the State of Victoria.

REPORT ON WARBLE OUTBREAK.

According to your instructions, I herewith furnish a report upon four head of cattle deported from the State of Victoria, Quarantine Station, Coode Island, to this State, found to be suffering from warbles.

The particulars are—three Jersey heifers and one Jersey bull, imported by Mrs. Cameron, of Lowestoft, and landed into quarantine at Coode Island, holding English certificates, were passed by the inspector and veterinary surgeon as free from contagious and infectious disease, but, after a short time, they developed Warbles.

This outbreak was reported to me by the Chief Inspector, Mr. G. Pentland. I immediately wired to hold cattle, not to forward until perfectly free, and to use disinfectants.

Being engaged inspecting stud sheep, I was many days absent from Hobart, and, upon returning, I perused two letters from Mr. Pentland. Fearing that he might ship the cattle, I wired him to hold cattle, as I was leaving early for his State; and, to my dismay, the same evening he replied the cattle were shipped. I then informed you, and detailed that Mr. Grubb's cattle had developed warbles in our Quarantine Station, "Nubeena," and that I had successfully dealt with the outbreak, and had no fear of undertaking the responsibility of cleaning these four head. Upon arrival at this port, they were lifted over the side of the steamship into the steamship *Result*, and taken direct to "Nubeena," under my personal supervision, where they are now detained and isolated from other stock.

The scare that has been created has been brought about by those who have no knowledge of and are not versed in such matters, who make statements easily controverted, and who, had the cattle been theirs, and representing £400, would have scouted the idea of slaughter as they do the existence of six months' quarantine from other States suffering from outbreaks of pleuro-pneumonia, an important precaution.

I hold the course I have pursued is a correct one, and submit I used all ordinary precautions to prevent the cattle being deported from the State of Victoria, and, had I recommended my Minister to have ordered their destruction, I should have given most unwarrantable advice, viz., to destroy £400 worth of cattle with pedigree on account of an outbreak of Warbles. The cattle are absolutely under the control of the Department; they are inspected and handled in their stalls twice a day by the caretaker at "Nubeena," who has instructions to report any fresh development, and treat them. The cages in which the cattle were carried from England were landed without any intimation to the Department, and these I ordered Mrs. Cameron's agent to remove to the Hobart tip, where I supervised their burning.

I may fairly add that when Mr. Grubb's cattle developed Warbles at "Nubeena," there was no scare; no deputation to Ministers to destroy the stock. The cattle were detained and treated until I considered them safe for release. There is no degree of comparison between the two cases, the "Nubeena" outbreak being most excessive compared with the four head of cattle now undergoing detention.

DR. WILLMOT'S REPORT.

SIR,—I have the honour to forward a memo. on the cattle (three Jersey heifers and one bull) in the Quarantine Station at "Nubeena," belonging to Mrs. Cameron.

In company with yourself, I inspected these cattle on the 8th inst. I found on one of the heifers two fairly large swellings, which might have been due to Warbles; but one swelling had been opened in Melbourne, the other had been opened here, prior to my visit, and their contents expelled; they were, therefore, useless in aiding in a true diagnosis of the case. I also found some small nodules, or swellings, on the side of the spine, in two other heifers. They were not pathognomonic of Warbles, and were due, I consider, more to the irritation caused by previous treatment than to Warble larvæ. I am fortified in this opinion by the life-history of the Warble. The ova of the Warble-fly in England (from whence these cattle came) is, as a rule, deposited on the back of the beast, the host; not later in the season than the end of September. It takes between seven, or, at the outside, eight, months to develop itself in connection with the animal, after which time it continues its life-history in the ground till it again becomes a fly. The Warble-fly must then have deposited the ova on these beasts not later than the first of October last year, and the larvæ should have been fully developed by the first of June this year, at which time the cattle were in quarantine in Victoria. As it is now 10th July, I do not see how the small swellings these cattle have can be Warbles.

As, however, there is evidence to show that these cattle did suffer from Warbles in Victoria, it behoves the Department to be on the safe side, and run no risk, in case some vagary of climate or other freak of nature may by any chance have delayed the development of any larvæ to a period later than the usual time.

I, therefore, recommend the detention of these cattle in quarantine under surveillance and treatment until it can be said with absolute certainty that the smaller swellings alluded to do not contain live larvæ of the warble-fly.

Your Department has acted judiciously in the treatment of these cattle, as the daily surveillance and thorough prophylactic treatment the animals are subjected to in quarantine will effectually prevent any further spread of the disease, without going to the unnecessarily drastic remedy of the destruction of such valuable stock.

I gather from the daily press (*Daily Telegraph*, 5th) that the nature of this pest is not thoroughly understood. The simple fact, however, of the damage done by it to hides alone in Great Britain being estimated in millions of pounds sterling should be sufficient incentive for us to make every effort to prevent its introduction to this Island.

Unfortunately, I may say for us the Warble-fly (*Oestrus*, or *Hypoderma bovis*) is not classified in England under the Contagious Diseases Act (animals), for the simple reason that no legislative measure could prevent its spread or cure it; but that does not alter the fact of its being a contagious-parasitic disease, and as such we should do well to classify it, in order to prevent its immigration to this Island.

From conversation with yourself, I gather that the usual routine on cattle being imported is, for the importer, at his own expense, to obtain from a qualified veterinary surgeon, after inspection of the animal, and before it can be landed, a certificate of freedom from contagious disease. Now, unless warbles is classified, as it undoubtedly is, as a contagious parasitic disease, this certificate would not prevent its admission to the State.

This rule does not, however, hold good for cattle imported from Australia or New Zealand, as from these colonies cattle can be landed without any certificate, and cattle might, as in the present case, be sent to quarantine in Victoria, and afterwards imported, without the existence of a disease being suspected.

It would be well, therefore, that all stock, no matter from where they come, be subjected to veterinary examination prior to landing.

R. WILLMOT, *New Norfolk, 10th July, 1901.*

Dipping Act.—I have previously reported that this Act requires amending, and until that is done, it is to a certain extent unworkable. I have instructed proceedings to be taken in a few flagrant cases, and have obtained convictions; but still, as the law now appears on the Statutes, the utmost difficulty prevails in proving a breach of the Act, and a continual source of trouble exists in endeavouring to compel all sheep-owners to dip to eradicate ticks. The amendment of this Act is of the highest importance to pastoralists of this State, and I am at a loss to comprehend the opposition that is inevitable when any attempt is instituted to make mandatory clauses to force compulsory dipping of sheep. The members of the Council of Agriculture are strongly in favour of an alteration, which must have a monetary benefit upon sheep-owners by enhanced value in the cleanliness of the clip. The eradication of ticks secures the unaltered characteristics of wool when placed in show or sale yards, to say nothing of improved appearance and conditions. Careless owners, having ticks in their sheep, should be compelled to dip, and not be allowed to infect clean sheep; and, by driving sheep in a dirty state to saleyards, distribute ticks broadcast.

I apprehend that the increase in sheep will be satisfactory in the coming season. The grand rain experienced last summer and autumn has been unprecedented, giving a great growth of grass and artificial feed, both rape and roots, for the coming winter. Fat stock, too, I think, will be fairly plentiful.

Stud breeders had most satisfactory prices to record at the last annual sales held in the Australasian States. This applies to both Merino and Shropshire breeders. The climatic influences of Tasmania seem especially adapted to the production of high-class animals of all descriptions; it has been proved so in the case of the Tasmanian Merino, and, with the favourable impression the Shropshire sheep are holding amongst feeders, they bid fair to be as eagerly sought after for mutton as the Merinoes are for their high-class fleece. I understand that a stimulus will be given to Shropshire sheep by large importations shortly coming forward from England, and introduced into this State by one of the most advanced breeders and experts of this class of sheep. Shropshire breeders by the establishment of their Flock Book have placed themselves in a most pronounced position. The recording of pedigrees fixes unmistakably the purity of a sheep offered for sale, and is a guarantee to purchasers that the sheep is descended from a sire and dam of undeniable breeding, giving confidence to those who are stocking the "Shropshire."

The stock coming forward will compel me to ask for an amount to be placed upon Estimates to wire-net two of the present cattle paddocks, to make them dog-proof; also, for the erection of two or three sheds for shelter, sheep-hurdles to keep rams and ewes apart, and repairs to be effected to dip, coppers, and yards.

The Rabbits Destruction Act.—The police working under dual control is not a success, and unless this Act is amended, and worked under a central head, who shall have absolute control of his inspectors, failure in dealing with the rabbit pest will be perpetuated. I find, after two years' experience of police supervision, that rabbits are not decreasing. I have, personally, been over country where the pest was as numerous as in past years, and where the police officer accompanying me admitted that he had no time to inspect outlying country away from his usual track of travelling. I do not consider the police officers are as blameable as those who passed an alteration of the Act and substituted police control for centralisation, which was working well, and as an experiment substituted a system of supervision by police, who cannot perform impossible duties, and who have had work thrust upon them, where, in many cases, they knew absolutely nothing of rabbits. During the past year few convictions have been gained, but in two cases lately heard penalties have been recorded against gentlemen who, from their position, should have carried out the law, and set an example to small holders of properties in the districts in which they reside. I have given very definite instructions to inspectors that, no matter what position the owner has, an infringement of the Act must be followed by proceedings. From perusal of reports to hand, it would be imagined that the State was fairly free from rabbits, they being entered up as "scarce," "not numerous," "fairly clear"; but still the rabbit has established his supremacy, as I anticipated the vermin would in my 1899 report.

The Vegetation Diseases Act.—This Act has, I consider, been the means of decreasing the introduction of pests, and, although a few interested persons protest against the restrictions that have been placed upon the introduction of nursery stock and fruit, still the members of the Council of Agriculture, after giving the subject due consideration, have deemed their action the only judicious

and wise course to pursue, and have, during their deliberations, studied the greatest good for the greatest number, fully recognising that they were undertaking most invidious work when recommending the lines upon which regulations should be framed when dealing with the second largest industry in this State.

Inspectors during the past year, under the regulations, have detained and destroyed a large number of cases of imported fruit from Australasian States infected with Fruit Fly.

The Entomologist attached to the Department has been able, from his knowledge of the habits of pests, to establish a record that has rarely, if ever before, been accomplished in any country, viz., to stamp out Fruit Fly, when it had once gained a hold in a country; but that he succeeded in doing in the cases that occurred in Launceston.

Scale Pests.—It is with the utmost regret that I have to record the existence of the San José Scale (*Aspidiotus perniciosus*) in a number of orchards in the South and North of this State, and that, after mature consideration, Regulations have been framed with the view of preventing the spread of the pest, and, at the same time, procuring for those in whose orchards it occurs, a large amount of latitude to enable the owner to market his fruit after compliance with certain provisions. These must, on the part of the orchardist, be fairly and honestly performed, and any attempted infringement shall cause inspectors to resort to the stringent enforcement of the law. I apprehend that an intelligent grasp of the serious magnitude of the discovery of San José Scale in the orchards of the State of Tasmania will exercise the minds of those whose interests are so jeopardised by the presence of the pest that they will one and all vie with each other as to who will best carry out the regulations in their entirety to prevent its spread, and by all conceivable methods attempt a speedy eradication.

The Codlin Moth Act.—This Act causes continual bickering during the season, and notwithstanding proceedings taken in the police courts, the pest is still as bad as ever. Those owning small orchards cannot be forced into the position of observing that by their neglect in an orchard of a few trees considerable loss is occasioned to adjoining producers with large areas. Some Boards are working energetically, notably, Franklin; but still, in other districts, members of Boards have been fined, even a chairman, for having infected fruit, and, in one instance, a member has not paid rates for a considerable time. There is no reason to ask why it has not been enforced. The officer's position would likely be affected by issue of information to recover

In concluding this report, I have to express my appreciation of the able and willing assistance afforded me by the clerical and scientific staff attached to this Department. Ready aid during pressure of work has always been forthcoming, so that the difficulties of overcoming unusually busy times have been averted.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

THOMAS A. TABART,
Secretary and Chief Inspector.

The Honourable the Minister for Agriculture.