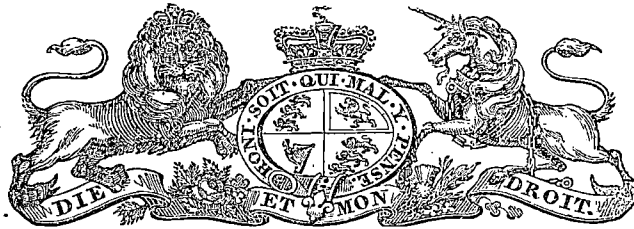


(No. 55.)



1896.

SESSION II.

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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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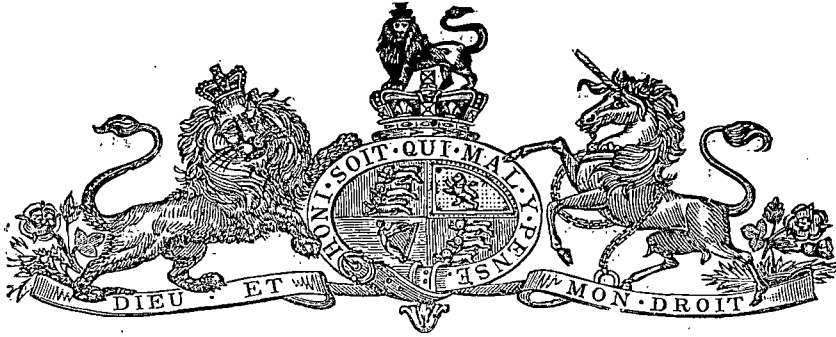
“THE STOCK ACT, 1889:”

REPORT BY CHIEF INSPECTOR.

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

Cost of printing—£1 10s.



“THE STOCK ACT, 1889.”

REPORT BY CHIEF INSPECTOR.

*Office of Inspector of Stock, Hobart, 31st July, 1896.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to furnish my Report upon the working of the Stock Department for the year ending 30th June, 1896.

It is with the utmost satisfaction I have to report that the sheep in the Colony remain free from scab disease, which must be the case so long as sufficient safeguards are continued in operation, and stringent quarantine regulations are enforced to prevent the introduction of disease. The importance of such action cannot be questioned.

The absence of scab from Tasmanian flocks is evidenced by improved quantity and quality of wool.

Stud-sheep breeders are also alive to the benefits derived from exemption from disease, which has extended over a period of fifteen years.

The annual consignment of stud sheep finds a ready and profitable market throughout Australia and New Zealand, and the export has extended to Cape Colony. It is undoubtedly a large yearly revenue to the Colony, and is the result of eradication of scab. Without this fact being established it would be impossible to furnish certificates necessary to admit Tasmanian sheep to a profitable market, hence it is that every precautionary measure should be adopted to enable Tasmanian breeders to hold supremacy against all comers.

During the present year circular letters were addressed to the various Agricultural and Pastoral Societies throughout the Colony by the National Sheepbreeders' Association of England, commenting upon and desiring a relaxation of the quarantine regulations at present in force affecting foreign stock; the most important suggested alteration being the period of detention now considered necessary in the Colonies to ensure safety from the introduction of disease. The circular suggests that the period of 60 days' quarantine upon landing should be reduced to 14 days. I cannot fall in with the views expressed by the Council of this influential association, for the following reasons:— Upon perusal of the latest authentic record obtainable from England, viz., the Annual Report of the Board of Agriculture on the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts, Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, &c. for the year 1894, I observe scab disease exists in 84 counties; the outbreak upon farms and other places were 2811, with 42,902 sheep attacked. This development seems to me incredible when (I believe I am correct in remarking) the Inspectors under the Board of Agriculture are for the most part veterinary surgeons. Again, if this large number of sheep are diseased with scab, it would be interesting to ascertain how many more sheep were infected by contact, so that if the diseased and infected sheep were duly notified the number would be considerably increased.

In addition to the above, 15,975 imported foreign sheep were detected as being affected with scab, the majority coming from Canada, the United States, and South America. They were slaughtered at the place of landing, but I can find no record made as to the disposal of the diseased skins, or how they were dealt with. With such facts before the Department it is an absolute impossibility for me as Chief Inspector of Stock, and responsible for the prevention of the intro-

duction of disease, to recommend that the quarantine upon English sheep should have the period of detention reduced from 60 to 14 days, but hold and have expressed the opinion at the various Stock Conferences that, considering the average length of voyage from England is from 45 to 50 days by steamer, that a quarantine upon arrival of 30 days would be ample protection against the introduction of scab, especially as the sheep have to be inspected on shipboard before removal, and consequently have to undergo two dippings in sulphur and lime. With the continuance of these precautions the immunity of Tasmanian flocks from scab will undoubtedly be assured.

I also observe in the same publication that Argentina, Canada, France, Germany, and numbers of the States of Europe have their flocks reported diseased with scab.

The safeguard from the introduction of scab into the Colonies from foreign countries is assured by the present restrictive regulations, which compel all such sheep to be imported through the Ports of London and Glasgow only.

The Tasmanian Shropshire Sheepbreeders' Association have been active during the past twelve months, and are with commendable promptitude pushing on the interests of the Association by bringing before the flockmasters the benefits and profits to be derived by producing Shropshire sheep, not only as a distinct type, but for cross-breeding. The impetus given in this direction is encouraging to those owners who have imported pedigree Shropshires from England at great risk and considerable expense.

I feel assured that the expenditure will be amply repaid, as the breed is rapidly becoming a most fashionable one in the adjoining colonies, where practically there will be no limit to the demand for pedigree sires and dams. The Association has most judiciously decided to issue a Tasmanian Shropshire Flock Book, which contains most valuable information for purchasers, who will now be enabled to trace the pedigree of sires, grandsires, and dams, the sires used for various years, also the names and addresses of breeders. This work must establish the confidence of buyers, who will be enabled to ascertain for themselves if any doubtful taint exists in a pedigree. From my knowledge of the great care exercised by the Inspection Committee, with the assistance of the Secretary (Mr. J. C. Penny), the security and record of purity of blood and clean breeding will be undoubted. This work is now in the hands of the publisher, and will have early circulation.

Breeders in Tasmania who have tried the Shropshire Merino cross speak highly of its success, possessing as it does early maturity, good weight as a butcher's sheep, and always commanding competition when submitted to auction, also finding considerable favour with the consumer for the excellent quality and flavour of the meat.

The customary Returns are appended hereto.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

THOMAS A. TABART, *Chief Inspector.*

*The Honorable the Premier.*

*EXPORT Trade in Stud Sheep to the adjoining Colonies since 1870 up to 30th June of the present year, with the Custom House Value thereon.*

Year.	Number.	Value.	Year.	Number.	Value.	Year.	Number.	Value.
		£			£			£
1870.....	807	4115	1879 .....	1496	47,259	1888 .....	4140	56,045
1871.....	998	4660	1880 .....	—	—	1889 .....	4660	60,472
1872.....	2433	15,500	1881 .....	1306	38,305	1890*.....	4748	65,110
1873.....	2586	15,547	1882 .....	1937	34,012	1891 .....	6581	74,892
1874.....	1997	20,895	1883 .....	2913	62,275	1892 .....	5398	37,774
1875.....	1673	23,414	1884 .....	3244	60,758	1893 .....	7262	52,464
1876.....	1403	18,157	1885 .....	2825	51,325	1894 .....	3985	24,229
1877.....	1303	10,103	1886 .....	2207	32,689	1895 .....	4384	21,034
1878.....	651	8485	1887 .....	4005	54,337	1896 .....	3208	21,172

\* Owing to delay in the sailing of the vessel, 2816 of these sheep, valued at £44,455, were not shipped until early in July.