

(No. 104.)



1881.

T A S M A N I A .

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y .

T I N N E D R A B B I T S :

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E .

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, September 7, 1881.



TINNED RABBITS.

Bowerbine, New Town, Hobart, 22nd June, 1881.

SIR,

ON behalf of the firm of Alan M'Call & Co., of 137, Houndsditch, London, I beg to bring before the Government of Tasmania their wish to establish in this country Factories for trapping and preserving rabbits and hares, the business to be carried on with *vigour*. As some guarantee for this I may mention that Mr. M'Call has large Factories both in London and in South America for similar purposes.

In consideration of the benefits to this country—

1. In the large amount of capital to be invested ;
2. In diminishing and practically exterminating the rabbit pest ;
3. In giving employment for labour ;
4. In introducing a good new industry ;

The firm ask that your Government will—

1. Grant to them the exclusive right and privilege to export all tinned rabbits and hares for a period of thirty years.
2. That the Government will give a bounty or capitation grant for rabbits packed and shipped.
3. If on crown lands where the Factories are to be established, or in any districts which the Government may name as desirable centres to commence operations, the practice of poisoning is resorted to, this shall be abandoned, as the flesh would be otherwise unfit for food.

We would esteem it a great favour if the Government would name those districts where the supply of rabbits would be the largest, and where their destruction would prove the most benefit to squatters and selectors.

Awaiting your favourable reply,

I have, &c.

HARRISON ORD,
On behalf of Alan M'Call & Co.

The Hon. W. R. GIBLIN, Esq., Premier and Treasurer.

Treasury, Hobart, 6th July, 1881.

SIR,

HAVING now had the opportunity of placing before my colleagues the proposals contained in your letter of the 22nd June, I have the honor to inform you that while Ministers are prepared to accord the most favourable consideration to any proposal for establishing a new industry in Tasmania, and thus providing employment for labour and increasing the export trade of the Colony, there are some points with regard to your letter which require further explanation, and in some cases modification, before they could be recommended to the Legislature for acceptance.

1. You speak of the large amount of capital to be invested by your principals. Are you prepared to name a sum which Messrs. M'Call & Co. will undertake to expend within a fixed period? and if so, please fix the amount and time.

2. As one inducement to Parliament to grant the concessions would be the prospect of greatly diminishing the number of rabbits in the Colony, and, as you say, "practically exterminating the pests," would your firm name a quantity as the minimum number of rabbits they would guarantee to kill in each year during the continuance of the arrangement?

3. The monopoly of exporting tinned rabbits asked for appears to Ministers to be for far too long a period; I would suggest ten years as amply sufficient.

4. What amount per thousand rabbits, exported in tins, would your firm ask by way of bounty? And upon this head I may say the demand of anything like a large bounty would be, in my opinion, fatal to the success of the proposal.

5. Any monopoly conferred, bounty or other privilege granted, would have to be upon condition that operations were commenced without delay, and prosecuted with vigour. Any substantial breach on the part of Messrs. M'Call & Co. of any of the agreed conditions should terminate the arrangement, as nothing but the benefits to be derived from vigorous and systematic destruction of rabbits would justify the granting of such concessions as those indicated.

As the subject is of importance, and the time for meeting of Parliament is at hand, I shall be glad to hear from you as early as convenient thereon; and I shall be glad also to know whether the objection you verbally mentioned to me, as to the public discussion at present of the proposals, would extend to prevent the Government from ascertaining the views of the existing Rabbit Trusts as to some of the practical questions which your proposals involve.

I have, &c.

W. R. GIBLIN.

HARRISON ORD, *Esq.*, *Hobart*

Hobart, 6th July, 1881.

SIR,

IN reply to your favor of this date, I will endeavour to treat each question as fully as my instructions permit.

1. The amount of capital to be invested is fifty thousand pounds (£50,000). It would be difficult for me to state the amount which Messrs. M'Call & Co. will expend within a fixed period, as that will depend upon the number of factories to be started, and the abundant supply of rabbits in each locality, and the difference of wages given for labour in town and country. All these considerations are such as only a careful calculation could determine. Should this point be deemed an absolute necessity, I will endeavour to ascertain by telegram.

2. As to the number we hope to destroy, much will depend upon the demand created by this venture in England, and the competition from the other Colonies should this prove a success. I think I should be safe in stating the minimum number at three millions (3,000,000). This also I will test by telegram if desired.

3. We would have preferred a longer period for the monopoly of exporting, as a guarantee and inducement to have the shares of the Company taken up. Ten years is a short time, yet we must bow if that term is the longest that can be granted.

4. My instructions are to stipulate that a bounty be paid by the Government to enable the venture to stand the diminished value in the London market caused by so large an import as we contemplate, and I am requested to ask one penny (1*d.*) each on all rabbits killed and exported.

5. Should the monopoly be conferred and the bounty granted, we are prepared, within six months of the passing of the Bill by Parliament, to commence operations and prosecute the undertaking with vigour under the conditions named in yours of this date as to breach of contract.

6. There is no reason why the Government should not ascertain the views of the existing Rabbit Trusts (in such a manner as would avoid publicity). I had intended waiting upon some of the gentlemen this week to hear their opinions upon this subject, but will wait the enquiry of the Government if desired.

7. There was one matter which I omitted in my letter of the 22nd ultimo. It was to request that all plant and machinery necessary for the Company's operations should be admitted free of duty.

8. I presume it will be immaterial to the Government where the factories are situated, so long as the work is done. My reason for mentioning this is, that I think it might be desirable to have factory at Hobart and one at Launceston, where there would be no difficulty in finding labour, and send the rabbits to these places daily by train. If these were not sufficient, to have another some ten miles from Ross, and a fourth near Maitland, all things being equal.

9. I have this day proposed to the firm in London to induce gamekeepers of good character who understand netting, &c. to emigrate under the bounty ticket offered by the Government of Tasmania, who would work the thing well and teach others also.

Any further enquiries I shall be most happy to answer; and awaiting your further instructions,

I have, &c.

HARRISON ORD.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer.

Treasury, Hobart, 8th July, 1881.

SIR,

I HAD the honor yesterday to receive your letter of the 6th instaut, written in reply to mine of the same date giving the views of the Government upon the proposals submitted by you for consideration.

Before dealing with the subject in any definite shape I shall require to consult the various Rabbit Trusts throughout the Colony with a view to obtain any suggestions they may think fit to make with regard to the matter, as they have been grappling with the difficulty of reducing the number of rabbits in the districts most infested for some years, and have gained much experience of a practical nature which the Government desire to take the fullest benefit of. Until, therefore, I have received their replies to my circular, which will be sent out at once, I shall not be in a position to communicate with you again.

It occurs to me that the bounty asked for by you upon the minimum number of rabbits to be killed in each year,—one penny per head upon 3,000,000, which would amount to £12,500 a year,—is excessive, when it is borne in mind that the firm will receive both the meat and the skins of the rabbits to be disposed of in addition to the bounty to be received from the Treasury.

At present many of the Rabbit Trusts pay at the rate of 1s. per dozen for rabbits killed, and in return receive the skins, which they dispose of for the benefit of the Trust, and so reduce the cost of destroying the rabbits to a minimum highly advantageous to the districts engaged in the work. But upon this point I shall be able to deal more fully when I address you again, which will be after I have gathered information on the subject from the Trusts.

I have, &c.

W. R. GIBLIN.

HARRISON ORD, *Esq., Hobart.*

[CIRCULAR.]

Treasury, Hobart, 12th July, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to forward herewith, for your perusal and consideration, a printed copy of Correspondence that has taken place between this Department and the Agent, at present in Tasmania, of Messrs. M'Call & Co., of 137, Houndsditch, London, a firm largely engaged in the manufacture of Preserved Meats and Provisions, of different kinds, for the English Market and Export Trade.

The great inducement to the Government to favourably entertain the proposals submitted is the probability that such a wholesale system of destruction as that contemplated by the firm would tend to greatly reduce the number of rabbits, and, if carried on with vigour, ultimately end in the extirmination of the rabbit pest.

From Statistical Returns at my command, it appears that in some of the infected Districts the Trusts have relaxed their exertions, and I learn that, as a natural consequence, the number of rabbits has increased,—and will continue to do so unless renewed efforts are made to grapple with the difficulty. Upon this point I shall be glad to have any information you may be in a position to afford.

The proposals, as you will observe, have been made direct to the Government ; but the Government is not prepared to recommend Parliament to grant out of existing sources of revenue the capitation allowance asked for by Messrs. M'Call & Co. : at the same time the Executive is fully alive to the importance of the subject, and to the necessity for active measures being taken to systematically destroy the rabbits, and therefore is willing to move in the matter if it is generally desired that they should do so.

I beg to invite your particular attention to the rate per head demanded by Messrs. M'Call & Co , and, if you consider it excessive, I shall be glad to obtain from you an expression of opinion as to what, in your judgment, would be a fair rate to allow.

The destruction of rabbits in large numbers every year is a matter in which the infected Districts are deeply interested ; it is reasonable therefore to suppose that they will be ready to agree to a special or general rate, made solely with the object of assisting any approved scheme calculated and intended to rid the Districts of this pest ; but this is a point upon which I desire to consult you, and obtain the benefit of your advice and valuable experience.

After consideration the proposals may appear to you to be impracticable and useless : in that case I shall be glad to have your views as to the desirableness of more stringent legislation being introduced for suppressing the rabbit nuisance, and to be informed as to the direction you would recommend it should take.

At the request of the Agent in Tasmania I have consented to treat this matter in its present stage as confidential, which perhaps you will be good enough to observe.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. R. GIBLIN.

The Chairman

Rabbit Trust.

Fosterville, Campbell Town, 14th July, 1881.

Sir,

I HAVE the honor to reply to your Circular requesting information in reference to the destruction of rabbits. As your communication is confidential I must confine myself to giving such information as I myself can afford, and you will be able to compare this letter with those from the other Trusts, and form your own conclusions.

I may say, in the first place, that this Trust is not doing anything at present, as we have to be guided by the action of the larger Trusts of Ross and Campbell Town. If we paid for rabbits, and they did not, we should expend most of our money in destroying their rabbits. The two Trusts I have named have expended large sums in the destruction of rabbits in former years, but are not doing anything at present, as they found that after all the expenditure the pest was as bad as ever, and they conclude it best to let each man destroy his own rabbits.

At the present time the price of rabbit skins is 2s. 2d. per dozen, and this is alone sufficient to attract all available labour, so that there are few runs in these districts (except the outlying ones) that are not occupied by hunters and trappers. This high price obtains during the winter season, and all the runs within a few miles of a township are pretty well cleared of rabbits. But when the breeding season comes in the skins rapidly decrease in value, until about November they are only worth about 9d. per dozen. Then the trappers leave off and betake themselves to shearing, harvest, &c., and the rabbits, being very prolific, are soon as numerous as ever. This is the time when a bonus would be of benefit. In the winter it is not required, as one man will sometimes make his £4 per week by selling his skins to the dealers. But it is in the outlying runs, far from the towns, that the rabbits are now increasing most, and from such runs it would be most difficult to transport the rabbits to the factories in sound condition, as rabbits keep fresh a very short time indeed. Messrs. M'Call & Co. would have to depend on the trappers for their supply of rabbits, as the importation of gamekeepers would be useless. Our trappers could teach them how to catch rabbits ; and the supply would depend upon the price they could afford to pay the hunters. You will perceive that the very season when rabbit skins are the cheapest is the one when it would be most difficult to get the rabbits fresh to the factories.

As to the question of bonus, while it would be of great advantage to give one while the skins are cheap, it appears to me that it would be difficult to find an equitable means of obtaining the money. I note that you do not contemplate paying it out of the General Revenue, although, as the pest is slowly, but surely, spreading all over the Colony, all Tasmania is interested in the destruction of the rabbits. Then, if the infected districts were compelled by law to pay a

rate, they would expect their own money to be spent in destroying their own rabbits. And, even then, the present Trusts could expend the money more economically, because they work gratuitously, and only pay a trifle to a Collector, and yet, as you see, they have given up paying money as bounty.

I see no objection to giving the Messrs. M'Call a monopoly for any number of years provided they carry out their promises, and they might be allowed a good sum as bounty on the first 100 tons of preserved rabbits exported. You might also see your way clear to allow their machinery to come in free of duty. There is very little, if any, poisoning going on, and that could be easily stopped; but as for the bounty you must judge for yourself when you receive the other replies. My opinion is that in winter, when the rabbit skins are dear, it is not required, but in the breeding season it would be a great benefit, if you can find a way of getting the money. I think I can say that my district would be willing to pay it.

In conclusion, I may state that my idea of the best plan for exterminating the vermin would be to expend no money except in the breeding season, and then to pay so much 'per' dozen for the young rabbits, which are easily taken in nests of six or eight each. If the Trusts would only give 6d. per dozen for young rabbits many settlers would give as much more, and large numbers would be killed. I have urged this upon the Trusts, without success. I have always paid 6d. per dozen for young rabbits, and still do so.

I think I have now given you all the information in my power, and I hope it will be of use. If you require anything further I shall be pleased to afford it. But as to how we are to deal with the rabbits in the remote and outlying runs I am at a loss for any practicable plan. It is a question of population more than legislation.

I have, &c.

THOS. B. BLYTH, *Chairman West Macquarie Rabbit Trust.*

The Honorable the Colonial Treasurer.

Symmons' Plains, 18th July, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge your circular marked "confidential," dated 12th instant; also correspondence with Mr. Ord enclosed.

My experience of the rabbit pest, as Chairman of the South Esk Rabbit Trust, is, that during the winter months the business of catching rabbits should be self-supporting; the price obtained for skins alone makes trapping a profitable undertaking, and when the carcase can be also utilised must add very materially to the profit. I am of opinion that no bounty should be allowed during the months April to October inclusive. If it can be satisfactorily proved there is not a fair margin for profit by preserving the carcase, together with the reduced value of the skins, between November and March, I think ½d. per head might be paid those interested in trapping, conditionally that trapping be carried on vigorously during the above months; otherwise, if left alone during the breeding season all past labour will be lost, so far as reducing the pest.

As to granting any "one company" the exclusive right to export tinned rabbits, I consider the Government are best able to judge.

It is true some of the Trusts have relaxed their exertions in dealing with the pests; but I am not of opinion rabbits have in consequence increased. The value of the skins, and ready sale for carcases in the towns and townships, have caused trappers to increase during the winter; but it remains to be seen what will be done during the next breeding season.

In conclusion I beg to state that, in my opinion, there is no occasion at present for legislation to interfere, so far as private property is concerned; but Crown lands require protection.

I have, &c.

CHAS. YOUL.

To the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer.

Campbell Town, 23rd July, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a letter from you of 12th instant, also copy of some correspondence with the agent of M'Call & Co. of London, as to a bonus on the number of rabbits they would engage to kill and export tinned.

As to M'Call & Co.'s proposition, the bonus they ask seems out of all proportion to the amount of capital they would expend, say—three factories, at £2000 each, or £6000,—on this they ask upwards of £1200 per annum. The Trustees to whom I have submitted the matter desire me to express their opinion that the proposals are impracticable and useless.

You ask further, if such is the opinion, “you would be glad to have their views as to the desirableness of more stringent legislation being introduced for suppressing the rabbit nuisance.”

They desire me to say, that the present Rabbit Act is sufficient if aid is given as to the Road Trusts, and can be more cheaply worked than it would be by a staff of Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors.

For six months of the year, say from 1st April to 30th September, the price of rabbit skins is sufficient to cause them to be killed without any supplementation, say 2s. per dozen; for the remaining six months they are worth very little, and paying for them and the small (from which there is no return), entails such a large amount, that though a shilling rate was laid on, paying from the 1st October to the 12th February, the Trust got so much in debt that a 3d. rate had to be put on to liquidate it.

All properties, the agricultural more than the pastoral, are getting much deteriorated in value through the general increase of rabbits, (for though not so thick in parts they are getting each year more spread through the country), so that if the general increase is not abated the ratepayers will have to appeal in a body against their assessments, and which would affect the General Revenue.

If assistance equal to the rate raised was given, it would be a strong motive to all districts to take vigorous action, and enable them to destroy the rabbits during the breeding time, and when their skins and carcasses are valueless,—say for the six summer months; this would avoid any compulsory and necessarily more expensive mode of dealing with this constantly increasing evil as affecting all landowners, and so the whole country.

I have, &c.

CHARLES H. LEAKE,
Chairman Campbell Town Rabbit Trust.

The Honorable W. R. GIBLIN, Hobart.

Macquarie River, 25th July, 1881.

MY DEAR SIR,

WITH reference to the rabbit preserving scheme, since I saw you I have talked this matter over with many gentlemen in this and other districts. The general impression is, that the scheme would answer well if a good price was given for the rabbits, (say 4s. or 5s. per dozen), which would encourage men to kill them in the rough country.

Since March 1st in this year, there have been over 21,000 dozen, or 252,000 rabbits killed in the Campbell Town district up to June 30th, and I am informed there have been as many killed in the Ross district.

If I can get you any more information on this subject I shall be most happy to do so.

Apologising for not writing sooner,

I have, &c.

MELMOTH FLETCHER, JUNR.

The Hon. W. R. GIBLIN, Colonial Treasurer.

Campbell Town, 25th July, 1881.

SIR,

IN addition to the several replies on the rabbit question sent you by the Chairmen of the respective Rabbit Trusts, we have the honor to offer you the following additional remarks and suggestions.

You will gather from the previous correspondence that the several Trustees, while they would gladly concede the monopoly required by the Messrs. M'Call, consider the proposal for giving a bonus to be one of which they could not approve. We now have the honor to express our joint opinion as to what course of action would be most expedient.

You will note that the Campbell Town Rabbit Trust had to cease paying for the young rabbits, after having exhausted rates to the amount of *1s. 3d.* in the pound within a period of six months.

It appears to us that as the whole of the Colony is vitally interested in the destruction of rabbits, the Government might see their way to propose that the several Trusts should receive assistance from the General Revenue to the amount of one shilling in the pound in addition to their own assessment of one shilling, to be devoted to paying for the destruction of rabbits.

We are strongly of opinion that if this assistance were granted it would be a great incentive to exertion on the part of the Trusts, and would have far more effect in promoting the destruction of rabbits than the bonus proposed by Messrs. M'Call.

We have, &c.

CHARLES H. LEAKE,
Chairman Campbell Town Rabbit Trust.
THOS. B. BLYTH,
Chairman West Macquarie Rabbit Trust.
GEO. W. KEACH,
Chairman Ross Rabbit Trust.

The Honorable the Colonial Treasurer.

Hilly Park, Oatlands Station, 25th July, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge receipt of yours enclosing particulars of a proposal for a Rabbit Preserving Company, and requesting opinion thereon, and any other information I could give.

In reply, I beg to say that I have spoken to several of the members of our Rabbit Trusts, but none of them were in favour of the proposed Preserving Company, as they thought the bonus of *1d.* per head too much; and further, that they would not be likely to carry on their operations during the summer months, when the rabbits were of inferior quality,—thus giving them opportunity to increase during the breeding season.

I should say it would be better to give so much per skin, or lb. of skins, on all exported—say one half-penny each; or else pass an Act compelling everyone to kill on their own property, something like the Act now in force in Victoria.

The Rabbit Trusts have power to send men on to kill, but I do not think they will ever carry it out.

I have, &c.

THOS. LITTLECHILD.

The Hon. W. R. GIBLIN, Premier.

Treasury, Hobart, 26th July, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the instant, in reference to proposals made by Messrs. M'Call & Co. respecting the destruction of rabbits, and beg to thank you for the information supplied. When the whole of the Trusts have answered my enquiries, I hope to write you again, giving the views of the Government on the question.

I have, &c.

W. R. GIBLIN, *Colonial Treasurer.*

The Chairmen of the Rabbit Trusts.

Hamilton, 18th August, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to inform you that I have submitted for the consideration of the Hamilton Rabbit Trustees your circular of the 12th ultimo, together with the printed copy of correspondence which accompanied it, between your department and an agent of Messrs. M'Call & Co., having reference to the preservation and export of rabbits and hares.

The Trustees are unanimously of opinion that the scheme proposed by Messrs. M'Call can only affect those Rabbit Districts in the neighbourhood of the Main Line Railway; and that the Hamilton Rabbit District is too remote from railway communication to be affected by the establishment of factories at Hobart or any place along the Main Line of Railway.

I have, &c.

JOHN KING, *Chairman Hamilton Rabbit Trust.*

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Hobart.

14, *Surrey Road, South Yarra, Melbourne, 17th August, 1881.*

SIR,

As Mr. Allan M'Call is now waiting in London to give orders for the machinery for the factories, and to take the first Mail Steamer for this, I am anxious to know the results of your enquiries from the Rabbit Trusts, and how far your Government are disposed to grant the concessions asked for by our firm.

A reply at your convenience will oblige.

I have, &c.

HARRISON ORD.

The Honorable W. R. GIBLIN, Esq., Treasurer.

Treasury, Hobart, 23rd August, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 17th instant, as to the result of my enquiry from the Rabbit Trusts concerning the proposal of Messrs. M'Call & Co. to establish factories for the preparation of tinned rabbits in Tasmania.

I have been kept waiting for their replies, the last of which only reached me yesterday.

The various Trustees, although differing in their opinions on minor points, appear to be almost unanimous in considering that the concessions asked for by your principals are extravagantly large. They all further concur in the view that, during the winter months, the value of the rabbit skins alone is sufficient inducement for persons to trap rabbits, and the evidence appears to prove that in this way large quantities are destroyed, the carcasses of which are for the most part wasted, the trappers in some cases earning as much as £4 per week each by the sale of the skins to dealers; the present price being 2s. 2d. per dozen. As the number of skins actually exported from Tasmania last year was 1,618,284, valued at the Customs by the exporting merchants at £12,579, it is clear that this inducement alone procures the destruction of a large number of rabbits, at any rate in the winter.

It would appear, however, that in the summer months the value of the skins is much less,—about 9d. per dozen,—and during those months harvest and other work being plentiful, the trapping is almost entirely suspended. There is, however, no unanimity of opinion on the point of special interest to the Government, viz., whether the rabbit pest is increasing in Tasmania?

I have laid the whole correspondence before my colleagues, and, after careful consideration I am now authorised to say that Ministers cannot undertake to recommend to Parliament to grant the concessions asked for, as they are of opinion that the undertaking would have a fair prospect of being remunerative without the large aids sought from the Government.

The extent to which Ministers are prepared to go is, that if Messrs. M'Call and Co. will undertake to establish and carry on factories, as indicated in our previous correspondence, then, in consideration of the beneficial effect to be produced by the reduction on the number of rabbits, and the establishment of a new industry, Ministers would recommend Parliament,—

- 1st. To admit all machinery required for such factories free of Customs duties into Tasmania.
- 2nd. To confer the exclusive right for (10) ten years to export tinned rabbits and hares upon your principals.
- 3rd. To grant a bounty upon every ton of tinned rabbits and hares, the produce of Tasmania, and manufactured in and exported from Tasmania, of Two Pounds.

I gather from your proposals that the minimum export would be 1500 tons per annum.

Should these concessions be satisfactory, it would be necessary to have an agreement drawn up, and legislative authority, while Parliament is still in Session.

I have, &c.

W. R. GIBLIN, *Colonial Treasurer.*

HARRISON ORD, *Esq.*,
14, *Surrey Road, South Yarra, Victoria.*

14, *Surrey Road, South Yarra, Melbourne,*
31st *August, 1881.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd instant. I immediately telegraphed to Messrs. M'Call & Co. for instructions, at the same time stating the terms upon which your Government were prepared to recommend Parliament to grant the concessions, and the extent of the same. Yesterday I received their reply, which is, "Accept terms mentioned."

I may also state that Mr. M'Call and his son hope to reach Sydney on the 18th November, and would, on receipt of my telegram on Saturday, float the company, order the machinery, and thus be able to commence operations according to the time stated after the passing of the Bill by Parliament.

Believing that your Government are prepared to meet Messrs. M'Call and Co. as far as possible, and thus facilitate the business they have in view, I beg, on behalf of my principals, to make application for a lease of the old Factory at Ross, formerly used in connection with prisoners, but now falling into decay.

As Ross is one of the chief centres of the rabbit pest, and a place where we might secure some labour and accommodate more, we trust the Government will favourably entertain our wishes, and state terms and duration of lease.

In my report to Messrs. M'Call and Co. (which they have received ere this) I also mentioned the old Military Pay Chest, situated in Hobart, as a desirable centre, if your Government could grant a lease of the present building, with the right to erect on the ground suitable premises, covering the whole area of present filled-in part of the harbour, and, if need be, to fill in still further, the extent to be specified by Government.

I shall be glad to know how far your Government could meet their proposals, that I might lay your reply before my principals at the earliest possible date.

I have, &c.

HARRISON ORD.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer.

Treasury, Hobart, 5th September, 1881.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st August, accepting the terms mentioned in my letter of the 23rd as those Ministers would recommend Parliament to grant.

I will at once take the necessary preliminary steps to obtain the authorisation of Parliament to enter into a contract upon the terms indicated in the correspondence.

With regard to the old Factory at Ross, and the old Commissariat Building in Macquarie-street, the Government will be prepared to make arrangements for leasing them on very easy terms, provided that, in the case of the building in Hobart, your principals will accede to such restrictions as will prevent any possibility of injury to health or nuisance to the neighbourhood by the carrying on of the manufacture or the removal of the refuse.

Any reasonable facilities for establishing and carrying on the business, the Government will at all times be prepared to grant.

I have, &c.

W. R. GIBLIN.

HARRISON ORD, *Esq.*, 14, *Surrey Road,*
South Yarra, Melbourne.