

(No. 33.)



1890.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

CALIFORNIAN THISTLE:

REPORT FOR 1889-90.

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



Office of Inspector of Stock, Hobart, 1st July, 1890.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to furnish my Report under "The Californian Thistle Act," for the year ending 30th June.

In my Reports for 1887-88 and '89, I suggested that if this objectionable weed was to be reduced, it required an amended Act to enforce the eradication, which has been proved can be effected by constant cutting: this method has been pointed out in every report I have submitted to you.

I again desire to bring under your notice the mode in which I propose to deal with this pest, the destruction of which would be a boon to the agricultural interests throughout the length and breadth of Tasmania.

It is as follows:—

MEMO. proposed Amendments in "Californian Thistle Act," 47 Vict. No. 17.

I beg to suggest that clauses be inserted with the view to exterminate the Californian Thistle. The following is an outline of the proposal; viz.—

An owner or occupier shall have issued to him an order or licence to destroy all thistles upon his property within two seasons, without payment of any fees.

The order or licence to date from the 1st September, and end on 31st May following.

Failing to destroy the thistles within the required time,—viz., two years,—an order or licence shall be issued for one season, at the following rate:—

		s.	d.
For patches (on any one farm)	up to $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre	14	0
" " "	from $\frac{1}{4}$ acre and not to exceed 1 acre.....	10	0
" " "	from 1 acre and not to exceed 5, per acre.....	6	0
" " "	from 5 acres and upwards, per acre	3	0

The destruction not being then attained, a renewed order or licence shall be issued for one more season, at the same rates as those named above. If a further renewal is required the rate shall be increased as under:—

		£	s.	d.
For patches (on any one farm)	up to $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre	1	1	0
" " "	from $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre and not to exceed 1 acre	0	15	0
" " "	from 1 acre and not to exceed 5, per acre.....	0	7	6
" " "	from 5 acres and upwards, per acre	0	3	9

Renewals of order or licence will be issued for one more season at the above rates.

I feel certain if such legislation were adopted it would materially reduce the thistles, and be the means of considerably increasing the value of the now infested properties.

If the Act were amended as I now suggest, the payment of Inspectors' salaries would then become a charge upon the agriculturists, and the rates levied would meet the expenditure.

I do not consider it just that the salaries of the Inspectors appointed to carry out the provisions of this Act should be made a charge upon the Consolidated Revenue, nor upon the Stock Act Fund.

The agricultural interests that benefit by the eradication of this noxious plant should, it is evident to me, bear the expense; so that if the above suggestions were made law, the proper industry will have to pay for the supervision to prevent the careless and negligent owners from propagating and perpetuating a nuisance to the injury of their neighbours.

I am obliged to refer to the working of this Act, and intimate to you that it will be necessary in the coming season to appoint two Inspectors, from the fact that the work as at present carried out cannot be performed effectually in the Districts of Richmond, Clarence, and Franklin: in the two first-named districts, because the "Stock" Inspector cannot give sufficient attention to the thistles as is required in so large a district as that "Stock" Inspector is compelled to travel over. The District of Franklin should embrace country as far as Brown's River, and also requires the undivided attention of an Inspector. At present the gentleman who was appointed now includes all country to the south of South Bridgewater.

In the Franklin District great assistance has been received from the police, but I must request that two more Inspectors be appointed to work "The Californian Thistle Act." In recommending these appointments I beg to point out that it will not be an increase to the staff of Californian Thistle Inspectors as originally authorised, but merely to restore two Inspectors who, when openings occurred under the present Stock Act, were successful in obtaining a position under that Act, so that the expenditure will not exceed that at present provided, and the work will be carried out with greater efficiency.

The reports I have from Inspectors show that the areas of thistles cannot be reduced in the Colony so long as the present system of preventing blossoming is resorted to. Large areas are annually ploughed through, and roots harrowed about the fields; when the plant matures and is fully out in bud, sheep are turned into the fields to nip them off, thus preventing the seeding, consequently the plant gathers strength to throw out numerous laterals, by which means the areas are constantly increasing. Partial cultivation is also another great assistance to the increase of the weed.

It is impossible in this Report to give any reliable estimate of the acreage of thistles in the Colony, consequent upon Inspectors having been only recently appointed, and therefore ignorant of the extent of thistles growing in their districts.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

THOMAS A. TABART, *Chief Inspector.*

The Honorable the Chief Secretary.