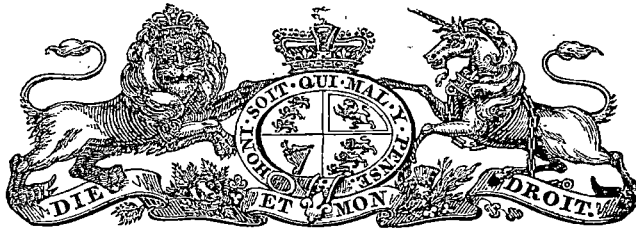


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1896.

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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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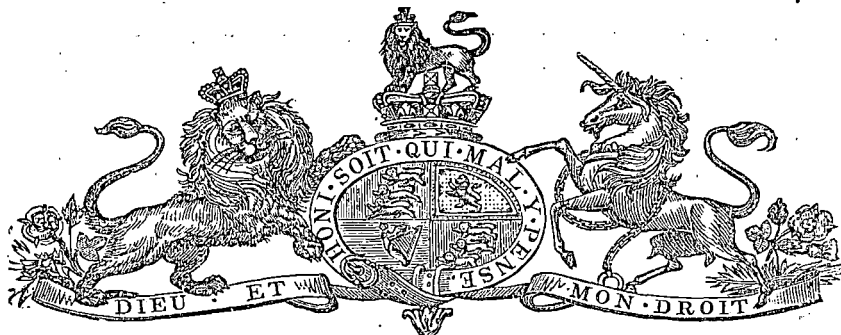
“THE CODLIN MOTH ACT, 1888:”

REPORT BY CHIEF INSPECTOR.

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

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‘THE CODLIN MOTH ACT, 1888.’

REPORT BY CHIEF INSPECTOR.

*Council of Agriculture, Hobart, 1st July, 1896.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to present my Annual Report upon the working of “The Codlin Moth Act, 1888,” for the past year.

My own observations and the reports from Fruit Boards evidence the fact that the means generally adopted to reduce the codlin moth are chiefly those prescribed by the Act, viz.—bandaging trees, and picking and destroying infected fruit, while spraying has been but meagrely carried out, and with varied success.

I am still of the belief that the pest can be reduced so as not to seriously interfere with the monetary return of orchardists. If a strict observance of the Regulations is maintained they are sufficiently drastic and explanatory to effect a cure. So far as general picking and the destruction of infected fruit is concerned, orchardists fall short in their efforts by not picking all infected fruit, which omission entails work for the following season.

Extermination can be, and in many cases has been accomplished by carrying out the regulations in their entirety, but unfortunately the impression of many intelligent orchardists seems to be that so long as the pest can be suppressed they consider they carry out the law as well as may be expected, overlooking the fact that to assure success the work must be thorough, and no half measures resorted to.

Many breaches of the Act have been committed during the past season, the most glaring being by a member of the North Huon Fruit Board, who failed to pick and destroy infected fruit growing in his orchard; he was prosecuted, found guilty, and the maximum penalty (five pounds) was inflicted, with costs. He pleaded guilty to a second charge of throwing infected fruit that had not been treated for the destruction of the grub into the Huon River. After the Bench heard the facts of the case, it showed leniency by inflicting the minimum fine. This case is one showing unparalleled disregard of the spread of the moth into the adjoining clean district of Franklin, as also for the safety of infection of orchards within his own district.

Too severe a stricture cannot be hurled upon any member of a Fruit Board who, by virtue of his appointment, should be an example in carrying out the law, and not himself commit a most premeditated and flagrant breach of the Act, which will possibly be the means of spreading the pest, and eventuate in ruin to the Huon fruit industry.

Another bad case was detected by the Hobart Fruit Board Inspector, who detained and destroyed seventeen cases of infected pears that had been conveyed from New Norfolk district to Hobart for shipment to the adjoining colonies. The owner of the infected pears was a member of the Fruit Board of the first named district, and was proceeded against, convicted, and fined the minimum penalty, viz. ten shillings and costs. Such examples undoubtedly demonstrate that self-interest is the first consideration, and that an utter disregard for the interests of the fruit industry of Tasmania is of minor importance.

Remarks from various Fruit Boards contain evidence of re-infection of clean orchards. This will continue unless the greatest possible care is exercised by occupiers of clean orchards; the pest is to insidious and easily transported from place to place, that unless orchardists are determined to stamp it out and keep orchards free from it, its extension be annually registered.

I desire to remark where I consider improvement would follow, and materially diminish the infected fruit in orchards. The law in many instances is not complied with, as is shown by Police Court proceedings, during the season when the moth is active. The Act has been in force for upwards of seven years, which fact the magistrates unwittingly ignore, but still the minimum penalty has its record in a very large majority of convictions, notwithstanding that some orchardists show two convictions against them. I deplore having to refer to this subject, but in administering the Act deem it my duty to advise my Minister whenever I detect a failure. It is manifestly unfair to an orchardist who works hard to reduce the pest to have a neighbour (possibly a wealthy one) showing an absolute disregard for the law, and who would rather be fined than trouble with picking and destroying his infected fruit. Again, many remark that it is more economical to be fined the minimum penalty than to treat infected fruit. I hold with the infliction of the minimum penalty in all first convictions, if not of a serious character, but future convictions should be visited with increased fines; ignorance of the law cannot now be admitted as a plea for leniency of the Bench.

The fruit shipments for the English market have this season been conducted to the satisfaction of producers and shippers; the quality of the fruit has exceeded that of any previous year, and on the whole the telegrams to hand of sales effected have been satisfactory. The general appearance of the cases has been improved, and some attention has been given to branding, which is a stride in the right direction.

It is patent to myself, as well as to many interested in fruit export, that there should be a registration of shippers' brands. It is a moral impossibility for an inspector to ascertain who is the owner of certain cases requiring examination from out of the great bulk stacked upon the piers, coming, as many hundreds do, from badly-infected districts.

The superiority of Tasmanian fruit must be maintained. This can only be done by exporters sending forward fruit of the first quality and condition and free from blemish of mussel blight, codlin moth, or black spot. The Act does not give power without a regulation, either general or local, to deal with the latter of these, which seriously depreciates the value of fruit, the loss on shipments of which would inevitably recoil upon the owner of the brand who trades with an unsightly and unmarketable product.

I purpose bringing before the Government the advisability of dealing further with "black spot." The ravages of this fungoid has resulted in great loss of fruit in several of the southern as well as some of the northern districts; notwithstanding the experiments that have been tried, it still continues active and on the increase. A leaflet has been issued under your directions dealing with the treatment likely to subdue the pest, and I beg to draw your attention to the fact that apples and pears are continually being marketed and exhibited in shop windows, and are known to have been shipped to the English market. This procedure must entail loss to the shipper, and be most detrimental to the fruit industry.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

THOMAS A. TABART, *Chief Inspector.*

*The Honorable the Premier.*