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APPENDIX.

1. Sold and leased lands—pastoral.
2. Sold and unsold land in Hundreds.
3. Colonial Secretary of Victoria's letter of 31st March, 1876, covering report by Secretary of Department of Agriculture, Victoria.
4. Colonial Secretary of Tasmania's memorandum of 28th March, 1876, covering memorandum of W. P. Latham (Council Clerk and Secretary Rabbit Trust, Hamilton) of 4th September, 1875.
5. Rabbit Destruction Acts—No. 13, of 21st September, 1871; No. 21, of 18th September, 1874; and No. 18, of 30th September, 1875.
6. "Cross and By-Roads Act, 1870."
7. Extracts on subject from Hobart Town *Gazette*.
8. Rabbit Destruction Act, South Australia, No. 16, of 15th October, 1875.

REASONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSION.

WHEN your Honor constituted us a Commission to inquire into the extent to which the rabbit nuisance prevails in Southland, we were aware that inquiries had been instituted by a Select Committee of the Provincial Council in 1875, and we had been told of the earnest desire expressed by a deputation from certain pastoral tenants of the Crown, that a Commission should be appointed to visit the districts said to be infested, and to report the result of their personal inspection and inquiries. Though many of these Crown lessees were suffering severely from the rabbit nuisance, and were well acquainted with the extent of the evil, they deemed it would be judicious in the Government not to be guided entirely by those more immediately concerned, nor upon the testimony gathered at Dunedin. The reputed rapid and sudden increase of rabbits within the short period of two years, created in some minds a feeling of doubt whether the statement of the case was not somewhat exaggerated by the fears of those who found themselves exposed to the evils resulting from this invasion, and hence the Crown tenants were urgent that facts should be fully ascertained, and the necessary remedies immediately applied.

NATURE OF DUTIES.

In the prosecution of the duty assigned to us, we have ridden over some 300 miles of country, visiting the pastoral tenants and others at their homes, inspecting those portions of the runs of the former considered by them as fair indications of the evils they suffered under, and making personal inquiries of every class as we passed through the infested districts. The result is embodied in this report. While we have not considered it to be within the bounds of our Commission to make any formal recommendation, we have thought it not unadvisable to group together the suggestions we have gathered as a contribution for what it may be worth towards the abatement, if not extermination, of the nuisance; nor have we deemed it obligatory on us to confine our attention to that portion of Otago known formerly as the Province of Southland, but have extended our inquiries to other portions of the united provinces; and have, moreover, endeavoured to ascertain what had been done in other colonies similarly afflicted, and with what results. In this direction we have been indebted to the Governors of Victoria and Tasmania, to whom we applied for information; to your Honor, from whom we received communications from the Chief Secretaries of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania; the report of the Chief Sheep Inspector; and the report of a Select Committee of the Provincial Council which had been specially appointed to take evidence on the subject.

ROUTE.

With a view of acquainting your Honor with the line of country traversed by us, it may not be undesirable to roughly indicate the route we adopted. On leaving Invercargill we passed through the Lothian and Lindhurst districts to the falls on the Mataura. Following up the right bank of that river to Gore, we proceeded to McCaughan's station, diverging into the Hokonui Ranges to Mount Peel, to ascertain whether the rocky districts were affected. Hence we proceeded up the right bank of the Waimea Stream, a tributary of the Mataura, passing by Young and McKellar's stations to Cowan's station on the left bank of the Oreti or New River, returning down the bank of that river to Webster and Gibbs's station, and thence by Winton, Ryall Bush, and Wallacetown, to Invercargill. This may be termed the Eastern District.

On the 28th March we resumed our inspection and inquiries, and passed through the sandhills to Riverton, and from Riverton up the right bank of the Aparima or Jacob's River, by Gummy's Bush, as far as Otautau. Thence diverging, we left the beaten track to visit Merivale Station, and passed onwards through the Waiau Plains to Clarke's station, on Linton Creek, visiting the eastern slopes of the Takitimos at an elevation of some 3,000 feet. Whence we crossed over to Brown's station at Bellemonte, near the left bank of the Waiau, and Brown and Barnhill's station of Blackmount; and striking northward we visited Dundas Station near the same river, and in close proximity to the Manipori Lake, ascending the Cheviot Hills, which lie half-way up the western ascent of the Excelsior Peak; and then advanced to Hankinson's station, our most northerly point, about midway between the Te Anau and Manipori Lakes, gathering as we went information about the few stations on the right bank of the Waiau River. This portion of country may be termed the Western District.

Having passed the boundary of the former Province of Southland, we struck off along the Mararoa River, crossed over some intervening ranges to Campbell's station, at Burwood Forest, leaving Central Hill on our right, and the West Dome and Five Rivers Plains on our left to Thornhill's