

1881.
NEW ZEALAND

THE RABBIT NUISANCE

(CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA RESPECTING METHODS OF ABATING).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, New Zealand, to the Hon. the CHIEF SECRETARY, South Australia.

SIR,— Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 9th August, 1880.
I should feel much obliged if you would kindly cause me to be furnished with copies of any Acts or Parliamentary Papers, and with such other information as may be in your power bearing upon the action taken by your Government to abate the rabbit nuisance in South Australia.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, South Australia.

THOMAS DICK.

No. 2.

The Hon. the CHIEF SECRETARY, South Australia, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, New Zealand.

SIR,— Chief Secretary's Office, Adelaide, 23rd September, 1880.

I have the honor to forward herewith documents containing information respecting the abatement of the rabbit nuisance in South Australia, as requested in your letter of the 9th ultimo.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

WILLIAM MORGAN.

Enclosure 1 in No. 2.

The DEPUTY-SURVEYOR-GENERAL, Adelaide, to the SECRETARY for CROWN LANDS.

SIR,— Surveyor-General's Office, Adelaide, South Australia, 7th September, 1880.

I have the honor to supply the following statement for the information of the Government of New Zealand, as requested by a letter to the Hon. the Chief Secretary, dated 9th August.

I have found, after many and careful experiments, that the most effectual mode of destroying the rabbits in their burrows is by means of bisulphide of carbon; and the proper form of apparatus for manufacturing such being now in use, and the right method of its application, no difficulty is experienced in keeping it in working order. The cost of making the bisulphide is about 9d. per pound, and there is now being made about 1,750 lb. per week.

Two methods of using the chemical are adopted by this department: if the bisulphide is pure, a can with measuring-tap may be used; if in the crude state, the impurities corrode the tap, and a different mode of using is adopted, *vide* copy of Instructions herewith.

In a series of experiments made it was found that the manner of using the bisulphide of carbon indicated in the Instructions was by far the most economical and effectual way of destroying the rabbits in their holes. Private persons have found out the value of the bisulphide, and are supplied by this department at 1s. 3d. per lb.

In addition to the use of the bisulphide, men are employed with dogs and guns to destroy the surface rabbits. There are at present employed in the destruction of rabbits 1 Inspector, 5 Sub-Inspectors, 163 men, and 7 boys. It is hoped that the work will be completed by July, 1881.

Up to the end of June last the operations of the Government parties have extended over 302,614 acres, over which area the pest has, practically speaking, been eradicated or reduced so as to be no longer complained of; this area extends over country about 200 miles long by about 20 miles wide, and

in one or two cases the blocks are isolated. The work has been done at a total cost of £24,600, or 1s. 7½d. per acre, some of the ground having been gone over three times.

The camp equipage now employed cost £4,420.

A copy of the amended Act is enclosed herewith.

The Secretary for Crown Lands.

I have, &c.,

G. W. GOYDER,

Deputy-Surveyor-General.

Sub-Enclosure to Enclosure 1 in No. 2.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING BISULPHIDE OF CARBON

Pour enough of the bisulphide from the jar into the field-can, or a small wide-mouthed bottle, for day's work.

Make a small ball about the size of a walnut at the end of a small stick, dip the ball in the bisulphide, and immediately place in rabbit-hole as far as possible, closing the hole at once.

Keep the bisulphide in a cool place, and not exposed directly to the sun.

The space in the field-can between the inner and outer lining should be kept filled with chaff or cotton-waste.

No. 3.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, New Zealand, to the Hon. the CHIEF SECRETARY, South Australia.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 16th November, 1880.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th September, in which, in response to the request contained in mine of the 9th August, you forward for the information of this Government a letter from the Deputy Surveyor-General of South Australia, giving an interesting account of the mode adopted in that colony for the extermination of rabbits, accompanied by a copy of "The Rabbit Suppression Act, 1879." I have to thank you for the attention shown to my request.

I now venture to trespass further on your kindness by asking for information on questions of detail arising out of the facts recorded in the letter of the Deputy-Surveyor-General. The information I ask for on behalf of persons in this colony interested in the abatement of the rabbit-pest is—(1) The means by which the bisulphide of carbon is best and most economically manufactured; (2) the shape and mode of construction of the field-cans which are used for its conveyance; (3) the material of which the balls used in its distribution are composed.

It is observed that a large sum of money has been expended by the Government department in the eradication of the pest, and it would be interesting to this Government to know what portion of that amount has been refunded by owners and occupiers of land as provided by the Act, and whether the process of recovering such moneys has proved difficult or expensive.

In this colony the system pursued differs from that of South Australia. Here the infested parts of the country are divided by Proclamation into "rabbit districts," in which Boards of Trustees are elected by the landowners, with power to levy rates and take all such steps as they may deem necessary for the destruction of rabbits within their boundaries. I enclose a copy of the consolidating Act passed this year.

The mode of destruction which has been found most effectual is by laying down wheat steeped in a solution of phosphorus, flavoured with oil of rhodium. (Ingredients, 100 lb. wheat, 1 lb. phosphorus, 1 oz. oil of rhodium, 9 gallons of water. Steep twenty-four hours before putting in the oil of rhodium; then cover carefully twelve hours, and use. Lay in dessert-spoonfuls on bare spaces.) The rabbits eat this freely, and it is a sure poison. It is not improbable that this may prove a valuable adjunct to the plan of suffocation by bisulphide of carbon.

I should be very much indebted to your kindness if you would cause me to be furnished with answers to the questions contained above, and with any further information on this subject, so important to the pastoral interest, as it may be in your power to communicate.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, South Australia.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS DICK.

No. 4.

The Hon. the CHIEF SECRETARY, Adelaide, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, New Zealand.

SIR,—

Chief Secretary's Office, Adelaide, 5th January, 1881.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th November last, and to enclose you copy of a report by the Surveyor-General of this colony with regard to the method of manufacturing bisulphide of carbon, the cost of destroying rabbits in South Australia, and the recovery of part of such cost from landowners.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM MORGAN.

Enclosure in No. 4.

REPORT by the SURVEYOR-GENERAL, Adelaide.

I BEG to state, for the information of the New Zealand Government, that the best method of manufacturing bisulphide of carbon is that of Gerard and Aubert, as described in "Payne's Industrial Chemistry."

A sample field-can, similar to those now used by this department, will be forwarded by first steamer to Mr. Dick, at Wellington, New Zealand.

The small balls for saturating with bisulphide of carbon are made of cotton-waste, the coloured variety being the cheapest, and answering well.

Up to the end of June last about £24,600 was expended on the destruction of rabbits in this colony, £4,420 of which is represented by stock and equipage, and, a large proportion of the balance having been expended on Crown lands, only about £3,000 are recoverable from private persons, who, as a rule, prefer to clear their own lands.

All expenses incurred in the recovering of amounts due for the destruction of rabbits on private lands are chargeable to the owners or occupiers of such land.

G. W. GOYDER,
Surveyor-General.

No. 5.

The Hon. the PREMIER, New Zealand, to the Hon. the CHIEF SECRETARY, South Australia.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 24th January, 1881.

I have the honor to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of your letter (No. 2,115) of the 5th instant, enclosing copy of a report by the Surveyor-General of your colony with regard to the manufacture of bisulphide of carbon, the cost of destroying rabbits, &c., in South Australia.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, South Australia.

JOHN HALL.

