

suffice, virtually, to clear the sea in each case, as all the birds come on shore to breed. The amount of oil to be obtained by all this destruction would be insignificant, and your petitioners believe would not amount to one thousand tons.

10. Your petitioners believe that the persons aforesaid purpose visiting island after island for the purpose of boiling down all the penguins thereon, and that, if they are allowed so to do, these birds will shortly be virtually exterminated.

11. Your petitioners also believe that all such of the other kinds of birds named as can be obtained will be treated in like manner, and in particular the mutton-birds, which are already an important article of food.

12. Divers persons also are in the habit of visiting the nesting-grounds of the albatross and taking the eggs therefrom. Your petitioners believe that if this be allowed these birds will cease to visit the islands. Your petitioners say that it is highly desirable that the albatross should not be driven to forsake the islands, because the eggs and young birds may at any time be the only provision of food for castaways at these islands. If at any time passengers and crew of a homeward-bound ship were cast away on one of these islands, the provision of food at the dépôts would soon be exhausted, and the castaways would be driven to depend on eggs and sea-birds for their subsistence. The eggs and young of the albatross would be at certain seasons the only available, and at all seasons an important, means of support.

Most of your petitioners' statements apply with equal force to the breeding-places of sea-birds on the main islands. Your petitioners further submit that the beauty and interest of these birds also merit consideration.

Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray as follows:—

That your honourable Houses will pass an Act regulating the capture and destruction of sea-birds on the main and outlying islands of New Zealand, and in particular submit—

1. That the capture of sea-birds for the purpose of extracting oil be prohibited;

2. That the taking of the eggs, except for food, and the capture of sea-birds at the breeding-places for their skins and feathers, be prohibited.

And your petitioners will ever pray, &c.

MARTIN CHAPMAN AND 21 OTHERS.

TUESDAY, 26TH AUGUST, 1890.

Captain FAIRCHILD in attendance and examined.

Petition of Martin Chapman and others, on the subject of the wanton destruction of sea-birds on islands adjacent to New Zealand, read.

1. *The Chairman.*] You have heard that petition read and you see what the petitioners want. We shall be glad if you can tell us what you may know as to the correctness of the allegations in that petition; if correct, as to the possibility of providing some remedy for the evil complained of, and to prevent the wholesale destruction of sea-birds that is said to be going on?—With regard to the number of sea-birds destroyed, as indicated in the petition, I think it might be multiplied by one hundred to get the correct number. As to the time it would take to destroy the rest, I think the statement in the petition is out altogether; you would want as many weeks for it as days are mentioned there.

2. As to the quantity of oil to be got from them, can you tell us anything about that?—About 6d. a bird for penguins. No doubt they could all be very soon destroyed if boiled down, they are so easily caught; they are so helpless, they will not run away.

3. Are they being taken irrespectively of breeding time?—Yes, that is not studied at all. I think they ought not to be destroyed merely for their skin and oil.

4. Are they being destroyed in large numbers?—They are being destroyed on the Tasmanian islands, which we have no control over, but the New Zealand islands are to be visited next for the destruction of these birds.

5. Which islands?—The Bounty, the Antipodes, the Snares, the Auckland, and Campbell Islands; these five belong to New Zealand.

6. You say they are not destroying them on these islands?—On the Macquarie Islands they are destroying them, but those islands are under the Tasmanian Government; they will work the birds out there in about five years. After they have worked them out there I know it is intended to take the birds on our islands.

7. Then, do you think that if New Zealand were to put her foot down now to prevent the further growth of this evil it would save them?—Except for scientific purposes, considering the very little that is to be got by killing these birds, the wholesale destruction of them should be stopped.

8. *Mr. Blake.*] You think that could easily be done?—I cannot say.

9. Do you know who the people are that are boiling down these birds on the Macquaries?—I only know of one gentleman who is concerned in it; he is an Invercargill gentleman. I dare say some of the members of the Committee may know him. He makes no secret of the matter himself. I mean Mr. Joseph Hatch.

9A. He is likely, do you think, to come to our islands when he has done with the Macquaries?—I know that he reckons on 70 tons from the Macquaries this year. If he gets 70 tons—but I doubt it—he would be likely to try the New Zealand islands. I do not think he will get the 70 tons he reckons on—that is, not in one year. I visit the place very often, and have been over all the breeding-grounds. Mr. Chapman, one of the petitioners, has only visited the places once. He did not have a chance to ascertain the numbers very correctly.

9B. But it was his visiting there that brought up this petition?—Yes; and what he heard was going on at the Macquarie Islands. The birds will certainly be wiped out there in a few years;