

Your Committee have much pleasure in congratulating the House and the country on the complete extermination of scab, and are of opinion that Mr. Ritchie, the officer in charge of the Stock Department, has acted wisely in causing the late exhaustive inspection of D'Urville's Island to be made; and the official report of no vestige of scab being found there will strengthen the hands of the New Zealand representatives when urging a full recognition of a "clean sheet" in this colony, so far as scab is concerned, by the Australasian Stock Conference, which will for the first time hold its sittings in New Zealand during the present month.

Your Committee also congratulate the House and the country on the general immunity the colony enjoys from cattle and sheep diseases; but the settlers must realise that these are gradually, but surely, becoming less as the result of close stocking and existence under more artificial conditions. It is deeply to be regretted that no effective check has been given to the disease which has destroyed so many of our sheep in Tauranga and other districts. The vast importance of obtaining a proper diagnosis of this and other diseases has caused your Committee to recommend the Government to secure the services of a highly-qualified veterinary surgeon, and are pleased to report that the Minister of Lands has promised to accede to their request.

Your Committee are also glad to obtain the assurance of the Government, through the Hon. the Minister of Lands, that it is their intention to secure the services of an entomologist, and strongly urge them to do so at the earliest possible opportunity, as the insect-pest is increasing with appalling rapidity.

It is also very satisfactory to be assured that the Government would endeavour to thoroughly equip the Agricultural Department, and periodically issue a journal of the proceedings for public instruction.

Your Committee strongly recommend the Minister of Education to take steps to introduce elementary agricultural teaching in the State schools, especially in country districts; also to make scholarships obtainable by pupils in the State schools, which could be available, if desired, for Lincoln College.

In considering the question of quarantine, your Committee are of opinion that the present regulations are too cumbersome, and much too costly; they were therefore pleased at obtaining the assurance of the Government that the subject would receive the careful consideration of the department, and that reforms would be speedily effected.

Your Committee took no evidence in regard to rabbits, with the exception of that of Mr. Ritchie; and from his statement it is inferred that in some parts of the colony there is no diminution in their number. After carefully considering the matter, your Committee passed the following resolutions:—

"1. That, in the opinion of this Committee, rabbit-tinning factories can only be worked profitably when the Rabbit Act has been allowed to become almost a dead letter; and that the Government should take immediate steps to deal effectively with the rabbit-pest in all parts of the colony.

"2. That, in the opinion of this Committee, when the Rabbit Boards in the colony are not carrying out the provisions of the Act under their charge, the Government should take immediate steps for the abolition of such Boards."

7th October, 1892.

F. LAWRY, Chairman.

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