

RABBIT NUISANCE ACT.

As a result of a communication addressed to the Board by Mr. A. C. Morton, of Ohingaiti, consideration has been given to the necessity of amending the machinery clauses of the Rabbit Nuisance Act relating to the formation of Rabbit Boards. At the present time Part III of the Act does not permit of the formation of Boards on any system of rating other than "rateable value," but as soon as it is constituted the Board must, upon a requisition in that behalf signed by not less than one-tenth of the ratepayers, take a poll as to changing over to an "acreage" rating basis.

With the passing of years and the cutting-up of large estates conditions have changed very materially in many districts since the Act was first drawn, and it has recently been found, in actual practice, that the absence of the right to establish Boards in the first instance upon an "acreage" rating basis has tended to retard the formation of new Boards, especially in districts which embrace hilly land worth a few pounds per acre, and flat, or comparatively flat, land of much greater value. The holders of the latter class of land, who would willingly sign a petition for the formation of a Board on an "acreage" rating basis, hesitate to sign a petition for the formation of a Board on a "rateable value" basis, because they cannot be sure that a poll to make the desired change will be successful. After reviewing the matter most carefully the Board is of opinion that it would be in the best interests of the Dominion to amend the Act giving the ratepayers the right to nominate in their petition the system of rating which they wish to adopt.

Another amendment which is also recommended, and which we feel sure will commend itself to you, is that the second election, and subsequent ones, of members of the Boards of Trustees should be held on the same day as the county elections.

A further suggestion which was made to the Board was that power should be given to levy differential rates; but after going into the matter most carefully the Board decided that it could not support such a proposal.

NAURU AND OCEAN ISLAND PHOSPHATE.

From a statement placed before it by the Director-General of Agriculture the Board was pleased to learn that there had been a progressive increase in importations, and that last year the Dominion imported practically the whole of its quota of 16 per cent. The Board is of opinion that the Department should, at the earliest possible moment, publish a comprehensive report as to the results obtained by the Department and farmers generally from the use of this phosphate, it being considered that the dissemination of information of this character would prove of great value in awakening a realization of the benefits which accrue to producers from its use, thus stimulating the demand, a thing much to be desired in view of the fact that the greater the output at the islands the lower the cost of production and ultimate cost to the farmer. It is understood that the Department has this matter in hand, and will make a pronouncement on the subject as soon as its experiments have progressed sufficiently far to enable a definite statement to be made.

All the resolutions passed by the Council of Agriculture have been dealt with and answers forwarded to the Secretary of the Council. Among other matters which engaged the attention of the Board were the following:—

- Brands and earmarks;
- Publication of rainfall statistics in *Journal of Agriculture*;
- Carrying out a practical test for frozen meat, especially beef;
- Control of noxious weeds;
- Control of cattle-tick;
- Establishment of an island quarantine station for imported plants;
- Importation and distribution of game-birds;
- Disposal of offal from seed-cleaning machines; and the
- Question of remission of fees for inspection of agrimotors and oil-engines owned by farmers.

The Board desires me to thank you for the encouragement it has always received at your hands.

Yours, &c.,

J. G. WILSON,

President.

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