

A paper, *re* Stenhouse's rabbit-exterminator, was also laid before the Committee. Deliberation ensued.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Menzies, *Resolved*, That a Sub-committee, consisting of the Chairman and four other members of this Committee, be appointed to consider the information laid before the Committee, and prepare resolutions to be submitted to this Committee, on Friday, as a basis for the report.

The Committee thereon proceeded to select by ballot the said Sub-committee, which being done, the Hon. the Chairman declared that Hon. Mr. Menzies, Hon. Mr. Holmes, Mr. Lance, and Captain Russell were chosen as a Sub-committee. It was further resolved that the Sub-committee should consider the administration of the Sheep Act.

Then the Committee adjourned till Friday, the 2nd July, at 10.30 a.m.

FRIDAY, 2ND JULY, 1886.

The Joint Rabbit Nuisance Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10.30 a.m.

*Present*: Legislative Council—Hon. Mr. G. R. Johnson (Chairman), Hon. Mr. Acland, Hon. Mr. Buckley, Hon. Mr. Menzies, Hon. Mr. Walker, Hon. Mr. Williamson. House of Representatives—Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Cowan, Mr. Dodson, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Lance, Mr. McMillan, Captain Russell.

The minutes of the preceding meeting were read and confirmed.

The Hon. the Chairman laid upon the table a letter received by him from Mr. Raymond, relating to the use of phosphorized oats in summer months.

The resolutions arrived at by the Sub-committee, and recommended as a basis for the report of the Joint Committee, were read by the Hon. the Chairman, and were as follows:—

1. That "The Rabbit Nuisance Act, 1882," has upon the whole worked well, and can be administered efficiently and satisfactorily by judicious officers.—Carried.

2. That any amendments made in the Act should be in the direction—

(a.) Of enabling Inspectors to compel simultaneous poisoning.—Carried.

(b.) That the maximum penalty for offences under sections 9 and 10 of the Act should be increased to £100.—Carried.

(c.) That the defendant in any proceedings under the Act should be allowed to produce evidence in mitigation of penalties.—Carried.

(d.) That a right of appeal should be given in any cases in which the penalty inflicted exceeds £10.

Mr. Dodson moved an amendment as follows: That the words "£10" be erased, and the words "£25" be substituted in lieu thereof.

And the question being put, "That the words £10 stand part of the motion," the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follows:—

*Ayes*, 5.—Mr. Kerr, Mr. McMillan, Hon. Mr. Menzies, Captain Russell, Hon. Mr. Walker.

*Noes*, 5.—Hon. Mr. Acland, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Dodson, Hon. Mr. Holmes, Mr. Lance.

And, the numbers being equal, the Chairman gave his casting vote with the Ayes.

The original question being put, it was resolved in the affirmative.

(e.) That powers be given to local bodies to expend moneys from their revenues in destroying rabbits on their reserves.—Carried.

3. That every effort should be made to multiply the natural enemies of the rabbit—namely, the stoat, weasel, marten, &c.; and that the Government be urged to import these animals continuously in large numbers.—Carried.

4. That the Inspectors should insist upon simultaneous poisoning with phosphorized grain within their respective districts during the winter months as often as may be necessary, and, where it is practicable, at least twice during the summer months.—Carried.

5. That a bonus be offered by the Government of 1d. per skin for all young rabbits (suckers).—Negatived.

6. That the Government be recommended to offer a bonus for the discovery of some means for destroying rabbits effectually, by disease or otherwise, provided that the life or health of any kind of stock be not endangered thereby.—Carried.

7. That in districts infested with rabbits the Government should, in any case in which the holder of a pastoral lease is willing to surrender such lease, accept such surrender at any time within eighteen months before the expiry of such lease, and thereupon offer the lease for a fresh term for sale by auction.—Carried.

8. That in any district where there are only a few or no rabbits the ratepayers should be allowed to form themselves into a "body corporate" for the purpose of administering the Rabbit Nuisance Act within their district; provided that a petition to that effect, signed by at least three-fifths of such ratepayers, be forwarded to the Governor, who should thereupon proclaim the boundaries, &c., of the district: the management of the affairs of the body corporate to be under the control of a Board, consisting of seven Trustees, to be elected by the ratepayers; and the moneys so raised to be expended upon works necessary to carry out the objects of the body corporate, including the erection of wire-netting fences. The Government Inspector, however, at all times to have authority to inspect and to report to the head of the department upon the condition of the district, and, in case rabbits shall be found to have spread or increased therein, the Governor, by Proclamation, to abolish such body corporate, and thereupon the provisions of the Rabbit Nuisance Act to be administered within such district in like manner as in other infested districts.—Carried.

9. Wherever any fence for the exclusion or protection against rabbits is erected by Trustees (as in the last resolution mentioned) upon unoccupied Crown lands, at least one chain in width on