

1887.
NEW ZEALAND.

INOCULATION OF RABBITS WITH DISEASE

(PAPERS RELATING TO THE).

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

No. 1.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 3rd September, 1886.

On the 28th March, 1885, the Premier wrote to you enclosing the copy of a letter from a Mr. Stroeve, a settler in Otago, on the subject of the destruction of rabbits. You replied on the 1st July following that you proposed to take an early opportunity of communicating with M. Pasteur upon the subject. Since then nothing further has transpired.

As the question is one of such vital importance to the pastoral and agricultural interests of this colony, I am satisfied it has not escaped your attention, and been inadvertently overlooked in the press of other business, and I am therefore led to conjecture that M. Pasteur has probably felt disinclined to assist in the destruction of life, upon the ground that his mission is to save it by all possible means. However that may be, I presume we may give up the idea of receiving any help from M. Pasteur. The subject was much discussed during the last session of the Assembly, notably by the Joint Committee of both Houses appointed to consider the rabbit question; and it cropped up in both the House of Representatives and the Legislative Council in the course of debate. I enclose a copy of the report of the Committee and of the evidence taken.

Since the prorogation of Parliament the subject has engaged the attention of the Government, and a letter has been recently addressed to this department by Mr. Lance, the member for Cheviot, who was a member of the Joint Committee above referred to, and who takes a very lively interest in the subject. I enclose a copy of Mr. Lance's letter. I also enclose a copy of a memorandum by Dr. Hector, to whom the question, with Mr. Stroeve's letter, was referred for his consideration.

I should feel much obliged if you would confer with some of the Canadian officers now in London, as suggested by Dr. Hector, and also with any other scientific men whom you may think it advisable to consult, the object being to ascertain if there is any disease which can be introduced into this colony which will destroy rabbits without injury to other quadrupeds or to man, and generally to consider the question of rabbit-destruction by any available means. Should any proposal be brought before you which seems fairly to promise successfully to destroy rabbits without injury to other animal life, you are authorized to incur such expenditure as may appear to you to be necessary to attain the object in view.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,

P. A. BUCKLEY.

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

Mr. LANCE, M.H.R., to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Christchurch Club, 25th August, 1886.

I find that there are two very strong and very adverse opinions held in this neighbourhood with regard to the introduction of stoats and weasels for the destruction of rabbits: the sheep-owners generally are in favour of their introduction, and the agricultural farmers are strongly opposed to it.

I myself am of opinion that these animals might hereafter prove a curse to the colony; but the rabbit must be dealt with, and the safest and surest method is to invoke science to our assistance. Time is of great importance, and I wish to urge on the Government the necessity of instructing the Agent-General by cable to put himself into communication with M. Pasteur or any one else that is likely to find a solution of the question. As few people have suffered and are suffering more from rabbits than the Agent-General himself, we may rest assured that we shall have his hearty co-operation in the matter.

I have been asked to call a meeting of the Wool-growers' Association on Saturday next, and I am informed that the introduction of stoats and weasels will be strongly urged: if I were in a position to inform the meeting that steps such as I have indicated were about to be taken, or, better still, had actually been taken, it would strengthen my hands very much, and might put a stop, for the present, at all events, to the outcry for the introduction of these animals. I think