

benefit of a training in scientific agriculture. In many cases the parents of such youths cannot afford to send their sons to the College. The association would therefore urge that scholarships should be established from the primary schools in the colony to Lincoln College, by means of which such youths might obtain the benefit of an advanced agricultural education.

*Instruction in Agriculture in Primary Schools.*—The association beg to call the attention of the Government to the importance of introducing into primary schools in the country districts instruction in the elementary principles of agriculture. They believe this would be of far more practical value and interest to the majority of children in those districts than some of the subjects to which their time is now devoted.

*Railway Carriage of Agricultural Produce.*—The association are aware that this is not under the control of the Government, but the subject is one of so great importance to agricultural and pastoral industries that they think that it should not be omitted from any reply to an inquiry as to their views on subjects affecting the welfare of these industries. Although the last harvest in this district was a deficient one, serious inconvenience was felt from the insufficiency of rolling-stock for the transport of grain, and an increase of this material is generally called for in the district.

*Lime.*—A considerable amount of land in this part of New Zealand would be rendered vastly more productive than it now is by the liberal application of lime. At present the high cost of the article precludes its use except in a few instances, and in most cases the greater part of this cost consists of the railway freight. If it were practicable to considerably reduce such freight the use of this and other manures would be largely developed, and the prosperity of agricultural interests greatly promoted.

The rates charged for the carriage of live-stock are at present so high as to place the owners at a great disadvantage in transporting their stock to market, and also to involve serious loss of revenue to the department. The rates charged are so much in excess of the cost of driving live-stock by road that the freight on a large portion of such stock which would be sent by rail at more reasonable rates is now lost to the department.

*The Export of Frozen Meat.*—A subject of large and growing importance to the colony has of late been considerably hampered by the insufficient supply of refrigerating-cars. The difficulties which such insufficiency will present to the growth of the trade are so serious as, in the opinion of the association, to call for an immediate remedy. They feel it their duty to call attention to the large amount of wool and other produce, the carriage of which is now lost to the railways in Canterbury in consequence of the railway-tariff being largely in excess of the rates at which such produce is being conveyed by traction-engines and waggons on ordinary roads.

*Quarantining Stock from England.*—The association beg to suggest whether the introduction of valuable stud stock from England could not be facilitated without risk of introducing infectious diseases by making the ninety days quarantine to which stock are liable commence from the date of shipping instead of the date of landing. If this were done stock would probably be forwarded at a reduced rate by sailing-vessels, and the heavy expense of the present system of quarantine would be diminished.

There are subjects which, if time permitted, would be urged on the consideration of the Government, but as the Minister presses for an immediate reply, the association content themselves at the present time with drawing his attention to the important questions above enumerated. They trust that it will not be considered a sufficient answer to their proposals that a compliance with them would involve some expense. Considerable expenditure has been, and is being, incurred by the colony in developing other industries of less importance than agriculture. In view of the fact that agriculture is the principal source of employment in New Zealand, and must be the chief factor in its permanent prosperity, the association believe that assistance should not be withheld from it, which has freely and wisely been granted to other industries of less general value and importance.

I have, &c.,

S. GARFORTH, Chairman of Committee.

The Hon. the Minister of Agriculture, Wellington.

SIR,—

18th July, 1891.

I am directed by the president of the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association to inform you that a circular has been received from Mr. R. Foster, Inspector of Stock for Canterbury, offering suggestions for the consideration of this association, with a view to suppressing the prevalence of sheep-stealing.

Mr. Foster's letter was referred to a sub-committee. They now beg to forward the following suggestions for your consideration: (1.) That earmarks should be registered for one ear only. The two sexes to be marked in opposite ears. (2.) That it should be illegal to use an unregistered mark in the legal ear. (3.) That a heavy penalty be imposed for altering the breeders' earmark. (4.) That a list of earmarks (legal) be agreed upon, and included in a schedule as part of the Branding Act, power being reserved to register new earmarks, which shall not include tattooing or the affixing of metal clips, by Order in Council. The committee would also suggest that travelling sheep should bear some travelling mark, to be applied before leaving the sellers premises.

I have, &c.,

M. MURPHY,

Secretary, Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association.

The Hon. John McKenzie, Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Wellington.

SIR,—

18th July, 1891.

I have the honour, by the direction of the president of the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association, to ask that you will institute inquiries as to whether New Zealand is now free from scab, and, if so, that you will be pleased to proclaim the colony clean,