

SIR,—

Doyleston, 10th September, 1891.

I am instructed by the committee of the Ellesmere Agricultural and Pastoral Association to forward you the enclosed suggestions in reply to your circular asking for their opinions on agricultural subjects.

The committee desired me to especially thank you for having accorded them the important (and by them much valued) privilege of holding direct communication with the Government.

I must apologize for the length of time that has elapsed between the receipt of your circular and the dispatch of these resolutions. But the circular came at a time when no meetings are held by our association, and, after the annual meeting, the discussion was twice postponed.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE BENNIE, Hon. Sec.

The Hon. J. McKenzie, Minister of Agriculture, Wellington.

SIR,—

Courtenay Agricultural and Pastoral Association, Courtenay, 14th July, 1891.

I have the honour to inform you that a committee, appointed by the Courtenay Agricultural and Pastoral Society, to consider circular from you of the 27th May, have instructed the secretary to reply as follows:—

1. That this committee thank the Minister for evincing so large an interest in agricultural matters, looking upon the appointment of a Minister especially for agriculture, whose duties no doubt will be to consider and promote the large interests involved in agricultural and pastoral pursuits throughout New Zealand, as a step likely to further advance those interests more than has hitherto been the case.

2. That the committee consider any alteration in the incidence of taxation at the present time inexpedient, and the infliction of a special land-tax as directly opposed to the welfare of agricultural interests.

3. That the committee trust the Government will use their best endeavours to promote the all important question of irrigation, by disseminating information as to the various systems in vogue, and the cost of same in those centres where irrigation is practically carried out. Also the granting greater facilities for acquiring loans for special purposes (such as irrigation) extending over longer periods, as they consider the benefits by such works will be more essential to the future than the present generation, and that the Loans to Local Bodies' Act might be amended in this respect.

4. That the committee are of opinion that the small-bird nuisance is likely to require further legislation, making the law more compulsory in its action, as well as to regulate the days on which special efforts should be made by every farmer to eradicate or minimise this pest. The County Councils should also have power to levy rates for such purpose without the restrictions implied in the present Counties Act.

5. That in the interest of agriculture scholarships should be instituted enabling boys in our primary schools to compete for such scholarships, and thus working in our primary school system with the School of Agriculture at Lincoln, thereby popularising that institution and making it of practical value to the people of New Zealand, and not as now, only a benefit to those who can afford to send their sons to college, also that elementary agricultural science should be included in the syllabus of primary schools.

6. That the committee are desirous of pointing out that the railway rates are excessive on the carriage of stock and wools. That the late small concessions made by the Commissioners in the tariff will have no effect in stopping the present enormous road tariff by traction-engines, and the driving of stock by road; and that those concessions will not prevent the great loss of revenue to our railways, as producers will still forward their produce by the cheapest modes,—viz., by traction-engines, and drive their sheep instead of using the railway. We should like to draw the attention of the Minister to the insufficiency of rolling-stock, and the advisability of encouraging farmers to build sheds at private sidings by reducing the present siding rates to a nominal cost.

7. The committee suggest that owners of cross-bred sheep should be compelled to dip on or before the 1st June in each year.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Agriculture, Wellington.

G. BEDFORD, Secretary.

SIR,—

Timaru Agricultural and Pastoral Association, Timaru, 14th July, 1891.

I have the honour, by direction, to forward you the following resolutions which have been passed by this Association in reply to your invitation by circular of the 27th May, a copy of which it states has been sent to all kindred societies throughout New Zealand:—

1. (a) That this association strongly protest against the proposal of the Government to specially tax land, as the members object to being singled out for special taxation; (b) they also recommend to the Government to alter the quarantine law, so that the date of quarantine should date from the time stock are on board ship at the port of sailing; (c) that this association endorse and approve of the action taken by the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association with regard to the management of the Lincoln School of Agriculture.

2. That it be represented to the Government that the railage rate for carrying sheep is excessive, more especially in store sheep. The first thousand (thirteen trucks) being charged £2 18s. 9d. for the first one hundred miles, and for each additional truck £1 10s. per one hundred miles, and all after that at 3d. per truck per mile. This association considers the whole should be charged at the latter price only, 3d. per truck per mile. We would also point out that all manures, including lime, should be carried at the lowest rates possible.