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RABBIT BILL.

THIS Bill repeals the existing Act, and re-enacts the law for the destruction of rabbits.

It limits the operation of the Act to three years from its coming into force.

It simplifies the working of the measure by making the law run throughout the colony.

It provides for the continuous destruction of rabbits, so that wherever rabbits are found steps can at once be enforced for their destruction without awaiting their increase to become so great as to be ruinous.

It avoids levying a rabbit rate. The provisions being stringent, owners must keep up continuous destruction of rabbits; the law providing that, if they do not, the work will be done for them, and they will have to pay the cost.

It provides for dealing with neglected or unowned blocks—hitherto an impossibility.

It simplifies services of notices, especially where more than one owner is interested in land.

It affords an equitable adjustment for cost of destruction as between landlord and tenant on short lease.

It provides for the protection of the natural enemies of the rabbit, and an attempt has been made to prevent their removal from, or destruction on, the lands of owners who have, at great expense, introduced them.

It provides means for winding up the affairs of Boards which existed under the Act of 1880, provision for which was not made in the Act of 1881.

It is hoped that, if wisely administered for three years, no further necessity for stringent measures will exist.

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This PUBLIC BILL originated in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL and having this day passed as now printed is transmitted to the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES for its concurrence.

Legislative Council,
29th August, 1882.

Hon. Mr. Oliver.

RABBIT NUISANCE.

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A BILL INTITULED

AN ACT to provide for the Abatement of the Rabbit Nuisance. Title.
BE IT ENACTED by the General Assembly of New Zealand in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

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SHORT TITLE AND INTERPRETATION.

1. The Short Title of this Act is "The Rabbit Nuisance Act, 1882;" and it shall come into operation on the first day of October, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-two. Short Title.

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2. In this Act, if not inconsistent with the context,— Interpretation.
 "Private land" means any land alienated from the Crown in fee-simple or for any less estate or interest, and whether by Crown grant, conveyance, certificate of title, memorial of ownership, transfer, lease, license, or otherwise howsoever; or any land whether alienated from the Crown

or not of which any person shall be in actual occupation, or in receipt of the rents or profits thereof :

“Crown land” means any land owned by Natives under their customs and usages, and for which no Crown grant, certificate of title, or memorial of ownership has been issued, unless there be any person in actual occupation thereof or in receipt of the rents and profits thereof, or any land not coming within the definition of “private land” herein contained : 5

“Owner” means any person, including in the word “person” any body or society incorporated or not, owning any estate or interest in any private land, or any person who by the law for the time being regulating the recovery of rates is or may become liable to pay any rates leviable in respect of such private land, or any person in possession or occupation, or in receipt of the rents or profits of any private land, or any agent, trustee, executor, or administrator of an owner : 10 15

“Inspector” means an Inspector of Sheep appointed under “The Sheep Act, 1878,” or any Act hereafter passed in lieu thereof, or any person who may be appointed an Inspector hereunder : 20

“Writing” includes printing or partly writing and partly printing :

Where reference is made to the service of a notice, it shall mean service in any one of the following modes— 25

(a.) Personally upon the person to whom the notice is addressed :

(b.) By sending the notice to such person through the post addressed to his last known place of abode or business in the colony : 30

(c.) By fixing the notice upon some conspicuous place on the land affected by such notice, or on some public road abutting thereon :

(d.) If the whereabouts or last known place of abode or business in the colony of the person to whom such notice is addressed is not known to the Inspector issuing such notice, by inserting the same three times in a newspaper circulating in the county or borough in which the lands affected by such notice are situate. 35

Where the name of an owner is unknown to any Inspector issuing a notice under this Act, or suing under the *thirteenth* section hereof, the notice may be addressed to the owner as such without mentioning his name, and similarly the owner may be sued and judgment given against him, as such without specifying his name. 40 45

3. The Governor may from time to time appoint any person to be an Inspector under this Act.

Governor may
appoint Inspectors.

AS TO DESTRUCTION OF RABBITS ON CROWN LAND.

4. Any Inspector, or any person authorized by an Inspector, may from time to time, at all reasonable hours, enter upon any Crown land for the purpose of seeing whether there are rabbits on such Crown 50

Power of entry on
Crown land to see
whether rabbits
thereon.

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and, and shall have free right of ingress, egress, and regress into, over, and across such Crown land for such purpose.

5 Any Inspector, or any person authorized by an Inspector, may from time to time enter upon any Crown land, and also upon the roads bounding such land, and use all such means and take all such measures and do and perform all and every such acts and things as may to him appear proper or necessary to insure the destruction of the rabbits upon such land.

Power to destroy rabbits on Crown land.

10 Provided always that the power hereby conferred of entering upon roads and destroying the rabbits thereon shall not be deemed to authorize the doing of any act which shall in any way injure such road.

15 6. All costs, charges, and expenses incurred under the preceding section shall be defrayed out of moneys appropriated from time to time for the purpose by the General Assembly.

Cost of such destruction, how defrayed.

AS TO DESTRUCTION OF RABBITS ON PRIVATE LAND.

20 7. Any Inspector, or any person authorized by an Inspector, may from time to time, at all reasonable hours, enter upon any private land for the purpose of seeing whether there are rabbits on such private land, and shall have free right of ingress, egress, and regress into, over, and across such private land for such purpose.

Power of entry on private land to see whether rabbits thereon.

25 8. Any Inspector may serve or cause to be served upon any one or more of the owners of any private land on which he believes there are rabbits a notice in writing, in the form or to the effect set forth in Schedule A hereto, requiring the immediate destruction of the rabbits on such land.

Inspector may serve notice on owner to destroy rabbits.

30 9. If, immediately upon the service of such notice, such one or more of the owners upon whom the same is served do not commence to do all such acts, deeds, matters, and things as in the opinion of the Inspector may be necessary to destroy the rabbits on the land mentioned in such notice in the shortest time possible, and having so commenced do not continue such action until such rabbits are destroyed, each of the owners upon whom such notice has been served shall be liable to a penalty of not less than *one pound* nor more than *twenty pounds*.

Penalty for neglect to comply with such notice.

35 10. After the expiration of one month from the date of a conviction under the *last* preceding section, if there shall still, in the opinion of the Inspector, be rabbits on the land mentioned in such notice, each or any one or more of the owners upon whom the notice referred to in the preceding section has been served shall be liable to a further penalty of not less than *five pounds* nor more than *twenty pounds*, and so on for each succeeding period of one month during which there shall still, in the opinion of the Inspector, be rabbits on such land.

Further penalty for continued neglect.

45 11. If any owner shall neglect or fail to comply with any notice as aforesaid to destroy rabbits, then, in addition to or in lieu of proceedings for the recovery of a penalty as aforesaid, any Inspector or any person authorized by an Inspector may enter upon the private land mentioned in such notice, and use all such means, and take all such measures, and do and perform all and every such acts
50 or things as to him may appear proper or necessary to be done to

In addition to penalty, Inspector may enter upon private land and destroy rabbits thereon.

insure the destruction of the rabbits upon the private land mentioned in such notice, and shall have free right of ingress, egress, and regress into, over, and across such private land for such period as may in his opinion be necessary for destroying such rabbits.

Owners within thirty days of service of notice to pay cost of destruction.

12. Any one or more of the owners of such private land who have failed to comply with a notice to destroy rabbits as aforesaid, and upon whose land proceedings as mentioned in the *last* preceding section have been taken shall, within thirty days from service by or by the direction of an Inspector of a notice in writing from an Inspector in the form or to the effect set forth in Schedule B hereto, pay to the person or one of the persons mentioned in such notice as being authorized to receive such payment the amount mentioned in such notice as being the cost, charges and expenses occasioned by the destruction of the rabbits in accordance with the *last* preceding section hereof, including therein the costs of the service of any notice hereunder; which amount when so paid shall, by the person receiving the same, be forthwith paid into the Public Account and form part of the Consolidated Fund. 5 10 15

If cost not so paid, Inspector to sue for same.

13. If any owner upon whom a notice as mentioned in the *last* preceding section has been served shall fail to pay the amount mentioned therein within the said period of thirty days, then the Inspector issuing such notice may sue for and recover the same in his own name in any Court of competent jurisdiction, or the same may be recovered as a debt due to the Crown under "The Crown Suits Act, 1881." 20 25

If judgment not satisfied within three months Colonial Secretary to certify amount to Public Trustee.

14. If any judgment recovered by an Inspector under the *last* preceding section is not satisfied, with costs of suit, within three months thereafter, the Colonial Secretary may forward to the Public Trustee a certificate to that effect, stating the amount due under such judgment. 30

Thereupon Public Trustee may sell land.

15. Immediately or at any time after the receipt of such notice the Public Trustee may, after giving notice in writing to all the persons whom he believes to be owners of such private land, or such interest therein as he proposes to sell, cause the private land, for the destruction of the rabbits on which the moneys recovered by the judgment were incurred, or such part thereof as may be necessary, or any interest therein whether freehold or leasehold, to be sold by public auction, unless the amount of such judgment and costs, and all expenses incurred in recovering the same, together with interest at the rate of *ten* pounds per centum per annum upon the amount of such judgment from the date of such judgment until payment thereof, and any charges which the Public Trustee is entitled to make upon the sale of property, are paid prior to such sale. 35 40

Proceeds of sale, how applied.

16. The proceeds of such sale shall be appropriated, first, to the payment of such judgment, interest, costs, and expenses; next, to the payment of any incumbrance on the said property; and the balance, if any, shall be paid into the Public Trust Office, and shall be paid, together with interest thereon, not exceeding *four* pounds per centum per annum, by the Public Trustee, upon the order of a Judge of the Supreme Court, which order may be made upon a summons in Chambers to such persons as may become entitled thereto, in the proportions in such order specified. 45 50

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17. With respect to any such sale the following provisions shall apply:—

Provisions applying to sale.

- 5 (1.) The sale shall be by public auction, and the Public Trustee shall have a right to bid for or buy in the property, or place a reserve upon the same, and he may put it up for sale as often as may be required until it be sold :
- (2.) The consideration to be given by the purchaser shall be a sum of money to be paid forthwith or by instalments, as may be fixed by the Public Trustee :
- 10 (3.) The highest bidder at the auction, subject to the rights reserved to the Public Trustee by subsection *one* hereof, if his bid shall equal or exceed the sum required to pay the amount of judgment and the costs incurred, and if he shall comply with the conditions precedent, if any, fixed by the Public Trustee, shall be the purchaser :
- 15 (4.) The purchaser, upon having the transfer or conveyance executed, shall be entitled to and may recover possession of the property so sold to him as against or from all persons whomsoever.

20 18. On the purchase-money being fully paid the Public Trustee may execute a transfer, conveyance, assignment, or such other document as the case may require, in the name and on the behalf of the owner whose interest has been sold, adding after his signature and seal of office the words "under 'The Rabbit Nuisance Act, 1882.'"

On purchase-money being paid, Public Trustee may execute transfer of conveyance.

25 19. No purchaser under any such instrument shall be bound to inquire whether the sale has been properly made under this Act, or be affected by notice either express or implied that there has been any impropriety or irregularity in connection therewith, and notwithstanding any such impropriety or irregularity such sale shall be good, 30 valid, and effectual at law or in equity for all purposes whatsoever.

Purchase not affected by impropriety or irregularity in sale.

35 20. Any instrument under "The Land Transfer Act, 1870," or under any Act passed in place thereof, executed for the purpose of carrying into effect any such sale, shall be registered by the District Land Registrar of the district in which the land dealt with thereby is situate, without the production of the duplicate certificate or other document of title relating to the private land dealt with by such instrument, if the Public Trustee is unable to produce the same.

Transfers may be registered without production of duplicate certificate.

40 21. If a notice under the *eighth* section hereof has been served upon any owner who is not entitled to the occupation for the time being of the lands comprised in such notice, then, unless the person in actual occupation or entitled to actual occupation of such land shall, within fourteen days from the service of such notice, arrange with such owner and to his satisfaction for the destruction of the rabbits on the said land, the said owner shall be deemed as regards such land to 45 have all the powers of an Inspector under section *eleven* hereof.

If notice to destroy served upon owner not entitled to occupation, he may enter and destroy.

50 22. Wherever there are more owners than one of any private land, and one of such owners is under this Act in any way compelled to pay the whole cost of destroying the rabbits on such land, he may, subject to the proviso hereto, in any Court of competent jurisdiction, sue for and recover from the other owners of such private land, such proportion of the costs, charges, and expenses incurred by him in or about the destruction of the rabbits on the said land, as is in the

Apportionment of costs between several owners.

opinion of the Court fairly proportionate to the respective interests in such land of the owners parties to such action :

Provided that for the purposes of this section any owner who is entitled to occupy such private land for any period exceeding three years or for a life or lives shall be deemed to be liable for the whole cost of destroying the rabbits on the said land, and that any owner whose right of occupancy will terminate in six months or less shall be entitled to recover the whole of such cost paid by him from the other owners of such land. 5

As to description of private lands in notices.

23. The description of any private land required to be inserted in any notice hereunder need not define the land referred to therein, but shall be sufficient if it makes such reference to the land, either by name, number of section or allotment, or by boundaries, or otherwise, as to allow of no reasonable doubt as to what land is referred to. 10

References to private lands to extend to roads bounding such lands.

24. All references to private land herein or in any notice hereunder shall be deemed to extend to the roads bounding such land, and any owner or Inspector or other person having power hereunder to enter upon private land and destroy rabbits thereon shall be deemed to have power to enter upon the roads bounding such land and destroy the rabbits thereon : 15

Provided always that the power hereby conferred of entering upon roads and destroying the rabbits thereon shall not be deemed to authorize the doing of any act which shall in any way injure such road. 20

MISCELLANEOUS.

Inspector, &c., not deemed a trespassor.

25. No Inspector or person authorized by an Inspector or owner shall be deemed a trespassor, or be liable for any damage occasioned by him in the exercise of the authorities, powers, and discretions vested in him by this Act, or any of them, unless such damage shall have been occasioned by or under the authority of such person otherwise than in the reasonable exercise of the powers conferred upon him by or under this Act. 25

Act not to authorize destruction of rabbits kept in cages.

26. Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to render imperative on any person to destroy any rabbits kept by him in cage or similar enclosures in close confinement, or to authorize the destruction of such rabbits without the consent of the owner thereof. 30

Governor in Council may declare any animal to be natural enemy of rabbit.

27. The Governor may from time to time, by Order in Council, declare any animal to be a natural enemy of the rabbit, and may from time to time alter and revoke any such Order in Council.

Penalty for killing, &c., any such animal.

28. Any person killing or selling, or disposing of any animal so declared to be a natural enemy of the rabbit, without a permit signed by an Inspector so to do, or in whose possession or on whose premises any such animal shall be found by any Inspector or by any constable, unless such person shall prove that the same was lawfully in his possession, or that the same was on his premises without his knowledge or consent, shall be liable to a penalty of not less than *five* nor more than *twenty* pounds. 40

Penalties for personating Inspector, &c.

29. Any person who shall falsely represent himself to be or shall personate an Inspector or a person authorized by an Inspector under this Act in any manner whatsoever shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and shall, on conviction, be liable to be imprisoned, with or 45

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without hard labour, for any period not exceeding *twelve* calendar months; and shall, in addition to such imprisonment, be liable to forfeit and pay a penalty of not less than *twenty* pounds nor more than *one hundred* pounds.

5 **30.** If any person, not being an Inspector or a person authorized by an Inspector, or an owner acting under the *twenty-first* section hereof, shall, without the consent of the owner, trespass upon any private land for the apparent purpose of destroying rabbits thereon, he shall be liable to a penalty of not more than *ten* pounds.

Penalty for unauthorized trespassing upon private lands.

10 **31.** Any person who shall wilfully obstruct, hinder, or interrupt, or cause to be obstructed, hindered, or interrupted, any Inspector or any person authorized by an Inspector or any owner in the exercise of any power or authority vested in him by this Act, or shall threaten, assault, or use abusive language to any such Inspector or person or owner
15 whilst in the performance or execution of his duty under this Act, shall, for every such offence, if not otherwise specially provided for, be liable to a penalty not exceeding *twenty* pounds; and no proceeding for the recovery of such penalty, nor the payment thereof, shall be a
20 bar to any action at law by any of the persons aforesaid for or in respect of any such assault as aforesaid, but every such action may be commenced and proceeded with as if this Act had not been passed, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

Penalty for wilfully obstructing, &c., any Inspector.

32. Any person who shall wilfully set loose any rabbits, or knowingly and wilfully permit any rabbits to be set loose, in any part
25 of the colony, shall, on conviction, forfeit and pay for each offence a sum not exceeding *fifty* pounds.

Penalty for wilfully setting rabbits loose.

33. In any proceedings for the recovery of a penalty under the *ninth* or *tenth* sections hereof, the onus of proof that he is not liable to any penalty shall lie upon the person against whom the information
30 is laid.

In proceedings for recovery of penalties under sections 9 and 10, onus of proof of exemption upon defendant.

34. In any proceedings for the recovery of money under the *thirteenth* section hereof, or for the recovery of any penalty hereunder, the jurisdiction of the Court or Justices before whom the proceedings are pending shall not be ousted on the ground that the defence raises
35 any question of title to land.

Jurisdiction of Court or Justices not ousted on ground that defence raises question of title.

35. All fines and penalties made payable by this Act shall form part of the Consolidated Fund.

Fines and penalties to be part of Consolidated Fund.

36. The persons who were Trustees of any Rabbit Trust constituted under "The Rabbit Nuisance Act, 1880," on the repeal of
40 such Act, shall, immediately on the passing of this Act, pay into the Public Account, to form part of the Consolidated Fund, all moneys in their possession or under their control as such Trustees; and, failing their making such payment, such moneys may be forthwith recovered from them, or any of them, jointly or severally, as a
45 debt due to the Crown under the provisions of "The Crown Suits Act, 1881."

Trustees of Rabbit Trusts under Act of 1880 to pay moneys belonging

Public Account.

37. All such persons as are referred to in the preceding section shall, immediately upon demand, deliver to any Inspector all property in their possession as such Trustees; and, failing their making
50 such delivery as aforesaid, the property so detained or its value may be forthwith recovered from them, or any of them, jointly or severally, by any one appointed for that purpose by the Governor.

Trustees of Rabbit Trusts under Act of 1880 to deliver to Inspector property belonging to them as such.

Colonial Treasurer to defray liabilities lawfully incurred by Rabbit Trusts.

38. The Colonial Treasurer shall, out of any moneys voted by Parliament for the suppression of the rabbit nuisance, pay or discharge any liabilities lawfully incurred by Rabbit Trusts constituted under "The Rabbit Nuisance Act, 1880," upon the certificate of the Controller and Auditor-General that they have been so lawfully incurred. 5

Act to be in operation for three years.

39. This Act shall only be in operation for three years from the first day of October, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-two, and no longer.

Repeal.

40. "The Rabbit Nuisance Act, 1881," is hereby repealed.

Schedules.

SCHEDULES.

SCHEDULE A.

"THE RABBIT NUISANCE ACT, 1882."

Notice to destroy Rabbits.

To [name of person or body to whom notice addressed], of [address].

TAKE notice that I, the undersigned, an Inspector under the above Act, pursuant to the provisions of the said Act, hereby require you forthwith to destroy the rabbits upon the following lands [here describe lands].

Dated at , this day of , 188 .

Signature :
Designation :
Postal address :

N.B.—Your attention is directed to the Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Sections of the said Act, printed on the back hereof.

On neglect or failure to comply with this notice, in addition to the penalties prescribed by these sections, the destruction of the rabbits upon your land may be effected by the Government at your expense.

SCHEDULE B.

"THE RABBIT NUISANCE ACT, 1882."

Notice of Moneys payable for Destruction of Rabbits.

To [name of person or body to whom notice addressed].

I BEG to give you notice that there is now due and payable by you, in pursuance of the Twelfth Section of the above-mentioned Act, within thirty days from the date hereof, in respect of the cost and expense of the destruction of rabbits upon the following lands [here describe lands], the sum of [here state sum]; and notice is hereby given that the same must be paid to [here state where payable].

Dated at , this day of 188 .

Signature :
Designation :
Postal address