

1889.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE RABBIT NUISANCE

(ANNUAL REPORTS ON).

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

REPORTS forwarded by Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors to the Hon. the Minister of Lands (Stock Branch) in reply to the following circular:—

- (1.) What means have been adopted for destroying rabbits?
- (2.) Have you any recommendations to make?
- (3.) What progress has there been made?
- (4.) How many tenders have been accepted?
- (5.) What did the whole of them amount to?
- (6.) Number and description of reserves you will require to deal with, and the approximate area of such available for grazing purposes?
- (7.) What quantity of phosphorus was used for Government purposes?
- (8.) What quantity was sold to private individuals?
- (9.) What was the quantity on hand on the 31st March, 1889?
- (10.) Number of prosecutions?
- (11.) Number of convictions?
- (12.) Number of dismissals?
- (13.) Names of owners of properties dealt with under section 11?
- (14.) Number of ferret-breeders?
- (15.) Have any ferrets been turned out by Government; if so, how many, and with what results?
- (16.) Have any ferrets been turned out by private owners; if so, about how many, and with what results?

General Remarks:

AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

SIR,—

Sheep Inspector's Office, Auckland, 18th May, 1889.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual rabbit report of the Auckland District for the year ended the 31st March, 1889, together with replies from myself and Sub-Inspectors to the queries referred to in circular. The Auckland District is peculiarly situated so far as the rabbit is concerned. Poison cannot be used, as it would destroy the Maoris' pigs, upon which they principally depend for food, and the greater bulk of the rabbits are either on or adjacent to the Native lands. The improvement during the past year, especially the bonus system has been adopted with the Waikato Natives, is evident, and should they continue to work as vigorously as has been the case the pest in Native country will be reduced to a minimum. Between the 31st March, 1888, and the 31st March, 1889, 65,877 skins at 3d., and 1,444 at 2d., were paid for to Natives, or a total of 68,321, with an expenditure of £835 9s. 11d. in payment of skins for the year. The only natural enemies in this district are hawks and cats. The latter are pretty numerous, and are of great service. Were it possible, I should like to see ferrets liberated in the King country on the verge of the infested area.

I have, &c.,

BENJ. P. BAYLY, Inspector.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands (Stock Branch), Wellington.

(1.) Shooting, hunting with dogs, digging out, and trapping. The latter is the principal mode of destruction on private properties and Crown lands. (2.) That some measures be adopted by which blocks of lands held by absentees could be more easily dealt with in recovery of expenditure for destroying rabbits thereon, and that the bonus to Maoris for skins taken on Native lands be continued. (3.) Very good progress. The rabbits are considerably reduced on European holdings, and the decrease in the King country is very apparent. (4.) Nil. (5.), (6.), (7.), (8.) Nil. (9.) 25lb. (10.), (11.), (12.), (13.), (14.), (15.), (16.) Nil.

From Sub-Inspector G. S. COOKE, Whangarei.

(1.) to (16.) Nil. *General Remarks.*—Having travelled, since my arrival in this district, from North Cape down to Waiwera, and on both coasts, I have only seen three rabbits. From all accounts there is only an "odd one" to be seen. Such places as rabbits would be likely to infest are populated, so they have no chance to increase.

From Sub-Inspector H. OLDHAM, Hamilton.

(1.) Trapping, shooting, and digging out burrows. (2.) No. (3.) Crown lands have been well attended to, and settlers have reduced the rabbits very much on their properties. (4.), (5.) Nil. (6.) Eleven, including Native reserves, varying from 15 to 800 acres. None available for grazing. Alexandra town lots not included. (7.), (8.) Nil. (9.) 3lb. 2oz., also 1 case. (10.) Seven. (11.) Five. (12.) Two. (13.) Messrs. Jackson and Russell, W. Aiken, and A. C. Carter. (14.) One. (15.), (16.) Nil. *General Remarks.*—The destruction of rabbits has been carried on vigorously during the last twelve months, and is still being continued, by which rabbits are not nearly so numerous. *Re the King country,* I am afraid that, owing to the reduction made in the price of rabbit-skins, the Natives will farm rabbits by allowing them to attain their full growth before killing them, so that they may obtain the extra penny. When paying the Natives at Kihikihi on the 17th ult. I had some difficulty to get them to agree to the price, 2d. for small skins, and they, with one exception, said they would take their skins home again, until persuaded to accept the price.

NAPIER DISTRICT.

SIR,—

Sheep Inspector's Office, Napier, 3rd May, 1889.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual rabbit report of the Napier District for the year ended the 31st March, 1889, together with my replies to the queries referred to in circular.

The Hawke's Bay Rabbit Board have, since the formation of the district, carried on the erection of the rabbit-proof fence near the southern boundary. It will be continued to a point near the junction of the Tiraumea and Manawatu Rivers. This fence has undoubtedly proved a great protection to the district, although, of course, rabbits are found on the north side. Rabbits are increasing on the south side, where the Board intend to lay poison during the winter. The Board will also turn out ferrets that they have received from the Waimata dépôt. The Board have two Inspectors, one at the southern end of the district and one at the northern end. There are rabbits over a large portion of the district, though not in any great numbers, but still they require constant attention. As a rule, owners are fully alive to the necessity of getting rid of them.

I have, &c.,

R. C. PASLEY, Inspector.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands (Stock Branch), Wellington.

(1.) Hunting with dogs, shooting, poison, and ferrets. (2.) None. (3.) Mr. Crosse, Inspector for the Rabbit Board on the southern boundary, reports that rabbits have been well kept down. Mr. Sheath, another Inspector of the Board, reports that there is a decided decrease in the number of rabbits. Inspector Thomson, of Gisborne, reports a few rabbits at Opotiki. (4.) One—for killing rabbits at Opotiki. (5.) £30. (6.), (7.), (8.), (9.) Nil. (10.) Two—by Mr. Sheath, Inspector of the Board. (11.) One. (12.) One. (13.), (14.), (15.) Nil. (16.) The Rabbit Board have lately turned out thirty.

WELLINGTON—WEST COAST DISTRICT.

SIR,—

Sheep Inspector's Office, Wellington, 13th May, 1889.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual rabbit report of the Wellington West Coast District for the year ended the 31st March, 1889, together with replies from myself and Sub-Inspectors to the queries referred to in circular.

In South Wairarapa the introduction of the natural enemy of the rabbit has been most encouraging. It is to be regretted that this introduction has not been adopted in Wairarapa North, where the rabbits are very numerous. This increase is no doubt partly due to the exceptionally dry season, but it would also appear that the poisoning last winter was imperfectly carried out.

For this season all owners are being advised that early and complete preparations for poisoning are required, and that a permanent and satisfactory reduction of the rabbit nuisance will be insisted on. It is submitted that with our present means—viz., poisoning, rabbit-proof fencing, and the introduction of the natural enemy—the rabbit nuisance need not continue to be a serious tax on the landowner. I beg to recommend that rabbit-proof fencing should be placed on the schedule of legal fences, and that every encouragement should be given by the Government for the introduction of the natural enemy.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Lands (Stock-Branch), Wellington.

E. CLIFTON, Inspector.

(1.) Poisoning, shooting, dogging, trapping, using ferrets, clearing scrub, and erection of rabbit-proof fencing. (2.) Every means should be taken to encourage the introduction of the natural enemy, particularly the stoat. (3.) In South Wairarapa the result of introducing and liberating the natural enemy has been most encouraging, but the rabbits are very numerous over a great part of North Wairarapa. (4.) Eighteen. (5.) £240 5s. (6.) Crown Lands, eighty thousand

acres, but of this a large area is bush: thirty thousand acres requires poisoning, and about twelve thousand acres Native Lands. (7.) (8.) (9.) Nil. (10.) (11.) Six. (12.) (13.) (14.) (15.) (16.) Nil.

From Sub-Inspector J. DRUMMOND, Masterton.

(1.) Poisoning; killing with dogs, ferrets, and nets; trapping; shooting; digging out burrows; fumigating with bisulphide of carbon; erecting rabbit-proof fencing; clearing bush and scrub lands. (2.) Turning-out in large numbers of the natural enemies. (3.) The dry spring and summer has been greatly in favour of the pest increasing. Taking the Wairarapa as a whole, I believe rabbits are more numerous than I have ever seen them before, the increase being confined to portions of Wairarapa North. (4.) Eighteen. (5.) £240 5s. (6.) No defined reserves of Crown Land. Approximate area which requires attention, sixty thousand acres, mostly bush; about twenty thousand acres available for grazing: Native Lands requiring attention, about twelve thousand acres. (7.) 36lb. (8.) Nil. (9.) 20lb. (10.) Six. (11.) Six. (12.) (13.) Nil. (14.) Five, but only in small numbers, for ferreting. (15.) Nil. (16.) None. The ferrets turned out in previous years have been doing good work, but the prevalence of distemper has discouraged breeders. *General Remarks.*—I believe an amendment of "The Rabbit Act, 1886," enabling settlers to form districts for rating purposes only, with a view to introducing natural enemies, but without giving them other executive powers, such as are held under Parts II. and III. of the Act, would find favour in this district. Settlers seem to object to the working of the Act being handed over again to trustees. I am of opinion that every encouragement should be given to the erection of rabbit-proof fencing by making such fencing legal under the Fencing Act. As population is admitted to be one of the greatest safeguards against the spread of rabbits, the settlement of Crown Lands should be encouraged in every way.

MARLBOROUGH-NELSON DISTRICT.

SIR,—

Sheep Inspector's Office, Blenheim, 17th April, 1889.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual rabbit report of the Marlborough-Nelson District for the year ended the 31st March, 1889, together with replies from myself and Sub-Inspectors to the queries referred to in circular.

Nearly all the rabbit-infested country is now under the jurisdiction of the Awatere Rabbit Board. Fairly good work was done in some places last winter, though in others it has not been so satisfactory as I should like to have seen it. Trapping and shooting for the factories is now going on, which must reduce the numbers; but I cannot say I approve of this industry, as it tends to preserve rather than eradicate the pest. Poisoning on the higher country has commenced. There are three blocks of Crown lands—about ten thousand acres—that will require poisoning this autumn. A thousand stoats and weasels were liberated by the Awatere Rabbit Board.

I have, &c.,

T. G. RICHARDSON, Inspector.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands (Stock Branch), Wellington.

(1.) Phosphorized grain, shooting, and trapping. (2.) Trappers should not be allowed upon large properties for the purpose of supplying factories. (3.) Fairly good during last winter, as the poisoning was a general success, but since the summer rabbits have increased greatly. Trapping rabbits for the factories is now being carried on extensively. (4.) (5.) Nil. (6.) Three blocks—about eleven thousand acres in all—known as Camden No. 2, unoccupied Crown lands at head of Tone River; and unoccupied Crown lands, Wairau River bed: all country of little value for grazing purposes. (7.) 5lb., sent to Cape Campbell. (8.) Nil. (9.) 30lb. (10.) (11.) (12.) (13.) Nil. (14.) One. (15.) Fifty; fairly good. (16.) About 850.

From Sub-Inspector A. K. BLUNDELL, Nelson.

(1.) Phosphorized grain chiefly; also trapping, hunting, shooting, and digging out burrows. (2.) Nil. (3.) In some places the rabbits have decreased; in others, there was a slight increase; but they are now taking the poison very freely, and there is a marked improvement. (4.) One. (5.) £2. (6.) Several small blocks of abandoned country, containing in all a thousand to fifteen hundred acres. (7.) 2½lb. (8.) 40½lb. (9.) 103lb. (10.) (11.) (12.) (13.) (14.) (15.) (16.) Nil. *General Remarks.*—I find that the most effectual way to lay poison where the holdings are small, as in this district, is to turn over a sod with a grubber or spade, and lay the poison on the newly-turned soil. By this means the rabbits can be induced to take the poison at any season of the year.

CANTERBURY-KAIKOURA DISTRICT.

SIR,—

Sheep Inspector's Office, Christchurch, 22nd April, 1889.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual rabbit report of the Canterbury-Kaikoura District for the year ended the 31st March, 1889, together with replies from myself and Sub-Inspectors to the queries referred to in circular.

The natural enemies liberated and the poisoning done by the department, together with the efforts of private owners, have been to some extent effectual in keeping the rabbits in check to the south of the Tasman.

In Canterbury, between the Government rabbit fence and that erected by the Hurunui Rabbit Board, the few rabbits which exist are not increasing, and, being of the semi-tame species, are easily dealt with.

In Amuri, north of the Waiau, the silver-grey rabbits have spread considerably, and had it not been for the natural enemies liberated by the Amuri Rabbit Board, and the other means taken, this fine district would have been overrun to a serious extent.

At Kaikoura there is a marked decrease in the number of rabbits.

During the year about six hundred stoats and weasels, eight hundred ferrets, and four hundred cats have been liberated.

About thirty thousand acres of waste lands of the Crown and five thousand acres of reserves have been dealt with by the department.

Rabbit-fences.

South Canterbury.—The completed portion of this fence—about forty-six miles—has proved an effectual check to the advance of the rabbits, and it is now placed beyond all doubt that this fence, the whole of which will be completed in June, will save Canterbury from the Otago rabbits, if it is carefully supervised.

Hurunui Rabbit Board's Fence.—This fence is now very near completion, and, it is believed, will also prove an effectual check to the rabbits from the north. Unfortunately, however, during the construction of the fence some rabbits have come through. Steps are now being taken to destroy them, and the fence is under effectual supervision.

The weak point with both fences is the danger of rabbits getting round the ends, where they terminate in the main range. This difficulty has been to a large extent surmounted in the south by the erection of a wing-fence at Birch Hill. It is believed that these points can be secured by wing-fences and careful supervision.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Lands (Stock Branch), Wellington.

R. FOSTER, Inspector.

(1.) Canterbury is protected from incursions of rabbits in the north by the Hurunui Rabbit Board's fence, and in the south by the Government fence. Between these fences only the semi-tame rabbit exists, and in very small numbers. (2.) Strict supervision over both rabbit-fences is all that is required for Canterbury proper. Sub-Inspectors Moore and Thomson will report as to the districts north and south of the rabbit-fences. (3.) Rabbits are fewer than last year between the fences. Outside the fences they are more scattered. (4.), (5.) Nil. (6.) No reserves. Hopkins and Dobson River flats and vicinity of Mount Cook, area unknown, may be thirty thousand acres. At Kaikoura some small reserves. (7.), (8.), (9.), (10.), (11.), (12.), (13.) Nil. (14.) Two. (15.) 191 turned out during the past month to the south of the rabbit-fence. I do not know the results yet. (16.) Nil.

From Sub-Inspector J. MOORE, Kaikoura.

(1.) Shooting, poison, ferrets, and trapping. (2.) That trapping be made illegal wherever the natural enemy has been turned out; that Waimanarara and Hapuku Reserves be let or sold. (3.) Good work has been done. With the exception of two properties, the rabbits are fewer in the district than they have been since the pest became established. (4.), (5.) Nil. (6.) About four to five thousand acres, principally rough fern and tutu country or sandy foreshore. About six hundred acres fit for grazing, but poor. (7.) 40lb. (8.) 34lb. (9.) 7lb. (10.) Two. (11.), (12.), (13.) Nil. (14.) Four. (15.) 125. Excellent results wherever they are not in the neighbourhood of farms. (16.) About 500. In all cases where distemper has not appeared results excellent, and on some properties apparently swept by distemper ferrets are now reappearing. *General Remarks.*—The natural enemy the only sure means of permanently dealing with pest. This has been put to practical proof by the state of Bullen's country, which is now practically free from rabbits, save on the boundaries, where they cross from adjacent runs. Much harm has been done by injudicious poisoning, and more by trapping, which is one of the great obstacles to the welfare of the ferret, cat, or other enemies of the rabbit. Poison, where it does not affect the natural enemy, is, in my opinion, the real remedy.

From Sub-Inspector H. S. THOMSON, Pukaki Ferry.

(1.) The use of phosphorized grain in winter; packs of dogs, digging out, and shooting during summer. 789 stoats and weasels were liberated around Lake Ohau, and in the fork between Lake Ohau, Pukaki Lake, and Tasman River. (2.) That ferrets in considerable numbers be liberated on the country situated between the Waitaki River and the line of rabbit-fencing running from the Tekapo to the Waitaki. (3.) A diminution on the lands where rabbits were most numerous, but rabbits gradually spreading over a larger area between Ohau and Pukaki. (4.), (5.) Nil. (6.) Fifty thousand acres, of which twenty thousand may be available for pastoral purposes. (7.) 95lb. (8.) Nil. (9.) 175lb. (10.), (11.), (12.), (13.), (14.) Nil. (15.) 183, between Pukaki and Ohau. (16.) Nil.

OTAGO DISTRICT.

SIR,—

Sheep Inspector's Office, Dunedin, 1st May, 1889.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual rabbit report of the Otago District for the year ended the 31st March, 1889, together with replies from myself and Sub-Inspectors to the queries referred to in circular.

Having only taken charge of the Otago District last October, I am not in the position to write definitely from my own observation on the decrease of the rabbit, but, judging from both the Sub-Inspectors' reports, and also from general information, the pest each year is getting reduced, and is only really bad in limited areas.

The chief reliance after the poisoning-season must be the natural enemy. The Sub-Inspectors are endeavouring to educate the farmers in the use of ferrets. During the past twelve months 5,537 ferrets have been bred and taken delivery of under Government contract at 7s. 6d. each, and 1,482 were purchased by the Government from private individuals at an average cost of 5s. 6d. each. Of these, about five thousand have been liberated, principally in the high country in Waitaki, Vincent, and Lake Counties, and the balance sold to runholders at half-price, either for immediate liberation or to be kept through the winter and turned out in the spring. Besides these, over four thousand ferrets have been bred and liberated by private breeders.

The beneficial effects of ferrets turned out in the cold and wet climate of Wallace during the last five years are sufficient guarantee of their usefulness if properly protected.

So few stoats and weasels have been liberated in the Otago District that I have no special information concerning them, except that they have been recently seen at Clydevale, Kawarau Falls, and Lake Wanaka.

The spreading of gorse and broom, both on freeholds and along mining reserves, &c., on river-banks, has become a very serious matter, and very strong measures will have to be resorted to for its extermination. Overgrown fences are also a great stronghold for rabbits. Bush-frontages and partial clearings are also another source of trouble.

In conclusion, I am so satisfied of the benefit accruing from ferrets that I would strongly recommend that authority be granted to enable me to arrange for a full supply during the ensuing two seasons. The employment of professional rabbiters, and trapping, should be discouraged in every possible way. I would also suggest that rabbit-proof wire-netting should be included in the list of legal fences.

I have, &c.,

ALFRED DOUGLASS, Inspector.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands (Stock Branch), Wellington.

From Sub-Inspector W. MILLER, Oamaru.

(1.) Phosphorized grain, shooting, digging out, hand-working ferrets, and liberating ferrets, stoats, and weasels. (2.) Would strongly recommend that the breeding and turning-out of the natural enemy be continued. Power to stop trapping where the natural enemy exists should be given Inspectors; and persons found killing or capturing the natural enemy should be rigorously prosecuted. (3.) Very great progress has been made on the runs in the Upper Waitaki, and throughout the district generally. (4.) Two. (5.) £85 2s. (6.) Four reserves—8,300 acres waste Crown lands, 30,000 acres reserves all fit for grazing, and about 10,000 acres Crown lands. (7.) 80lb. (8.) Nil. (9.) 20lb. (10.) Four. (11.) Nil. (12.) Nil. (13.) Two. Robert Stewart and Marcus Gunn, both of Kurow district. (14.) Five (one Government). (15.) 1,363. Up to the present they are doing well. (16.) 2,022; also doing well. *General Remarks.*—Every possible means have been taken to cope with the rabbit-pest in the Waitaki District during the last twelve months. The country on the Canterbury boundary and the rabbit-infested islands in the Waitaki River have been thoroughly dealt with. Ferrets have been turned out this summer on all the large holdings in considerable numbers.

From Sub-Inspector R. HULL, Palmerston South.

(1.) Phosphorized grain, trapping, dogging, shooting, fumigating, and flooding with water-races on low lands. (2.) That wire-netting as a legal fence be included in the Fencing Act. (3.) Cannot answer, as I have only been here since October last; but they have increased on the low lands during the breeding-season. (4.) Eleven. (5.) £98 10s. 10d. (6.) Eleven; comprising about three thousand three hundred acres, about two thousand fit for grazing. (7.), (8.), (9.) Nil. (10.) Seven. (11.) Six. (12.) One. (13.) Four. (14.) Three. (15.) Nil. (16.) About six hundred. Unsatisfactory on low lands; good on the high country.

From Sub-Inspector R. CORBETT, Clyde.

(1.) Poisoning in the winter, shooting and trapping. (2.) That cats, stoats, weasels, and ferrets be turned out in large numbers, and that trained ferrets with nets be used instead of trapping. (3.) Very fair progress. Last winter's poisoning was very successful. (4.) Seven. (5.) £599 15s. (6.) Hunter country, 30,000 acres; Cromwell Commonage, 9,000 acres; Clyde Commonage, 5,700 acres; Hawea Hundreds, 12,000 acres; Black's Commonage, 1,500 acres; Run 459, Dingle, 8,500 acres; and possibly Run 433, Mount Iron, 7,000 acres. (7.) 25lb. (8.) 25lb. (9.) 50lb. (10.) Twelve. (11.) Ten. (12.) One, and one withdrawn. (13.) Leahy. (14.) Four. (15.) Six hundred in February and March. Not sufficient time to give results. (16.) Twelve hundred during February and March. Also too soon to give results: hear they are thriving. *General Remarks.*—Owners are now alive to the advantages of simultaneous poisoning. I am quite satisfied that the working of trained ferrets will be found more efficacious than trapping. A large and influential meeting, at which all the runs in the county were represented bar one, and at which there were also present a number of farmers, was held in Clyde in March, and the meeting was unanimous that poisoning and the natural enemy were the best means of dealing with the rabbit-pest.

From Sub-Inspector W. A. SCAIFE, Outram.

(1.) Poisoning with phosphorized grain during winter, dogging, shooting, trapping, and ferreting. (2.) Inspector should have further power to compel owners to cut gorse fences and remove spreading gorse. (3.) Fair progress has been made: stock is in good condition, and feed nearly everywhere.

plentiful. (4.) Four. (5.) £45 5s. (6.) Eight—hundreds; native, mining, and bush reserves—about 6,900 acres in all; about 5,000 acres suitable for grazing. (7.), (8.), (9.), (10.), (11.), (12.), (13.), (14.) Nil. (15.) Eighty-two sent to Queenstown; thirty-two sold at Balclutha; eighty-two sold at Lee Flat Station, and to other owners in the district. (16.) About 180 at Gladbrook Station; sixty at Lee Flat Station. Satisfactory. *General Remarks.*—I regret that settlers in this district are generally averse to liberating ferrets on their properties, but I endeavour to encourage them to keep working-ferrets. I find “bladder worm” is showing among the rabbits in the Strath Taieri portion of the district. A few rabbits are occasionally found which have died from the effects, and many at poisoning last year were found affected with the disease; but it does not appear to be sufficiently infectious to be regarded as a means of extermination.

From Sub-Inspector B. FULLARTON, Balclutha.

(1.) Poisoned grain in winter, trapping, shooting, dogging, digging out the burrows, working ferrets by hand, and turning out ferrets. Bisulphide of carbon has been used on some holdings with good results. (2.) Gorse, which is allowed very much to spread, should be dealt with by Act of Parliament: it is one of the greatest harbours for the pest, and I would recommend working ferrets by hand to be encouraged. (3.) I find rabbits are not so numerous, as a whole, as they were last year in some parts of my district. They are greatly reduced on the open country; the bush is the great harbour in the Clutha, and it is difficult to get at them there. (4.) Two. (5.) £58. (6.) Twenty-two reserves and unoccupied land: approximate area, a hundred thousand acres—about fifteen hundred acres rough pastoral country, the remainder mostly dense bush. (7.) Eighty-six. (8.) Nil. (9.) 130lb. (10.) Five. (11.) Five. (12.) Nil. (13.) W. Ford, J. Hume, and Clutha River Trust Board. (14.) Three. (15.) 655. Not able to say as to results—only lately turned out. (16.) About 180 stoats and weasels have been turned out by the Australian Land Company on Clydevale Estate; they have not as yet shown any results. *General Remarks.*—On the whole, rabbits have decreased considerably since last year, and with a good poisoning-season I think we shall be able to reduce them to such an extent that they will not be felt as they have been in some parts of this district in past years.

From Sub-Inspector T. J. MILES, Lawrence.

(1.) During winter months poisoning, during remainder of year shooting, trapping (in places), ferrets in hand. (2.) That ferrets in large numbers be turned out immediately after poisoning-season in order that they may cope with the increase during the breeding-season; also that the gorse nuisance be taken in hand. (3.) Very good: rabbits are less plentiful just now than at same time last year. (4.) One. (5.) £72. (6.) About fifty thousand acres, mining, bush, and commonages, and unsold lands; about one-half available for grazing purposes. (7.) 142lb. (8.) Nil. (9.) 61lb. (10.), (11.), (12.), (13.) Nil. (14.) Ten. (15.) 500. (16.) About seven hundred, with good results. *General Remarks.*—Where ferrets have been turned out after poisoning in sufficient quantities the decrease of the rabbits is most marked; but so far the number so turned out is far short of requirements, as where there are ferrets you must not employ rabbits unless with ferrets in hand; and if the natural enemy are to do any good it must be left to them during spring and summer, and to poisoning in winter.

From Sub-Inspector J. M. SCOTT, Queenstown.

(1.) Phosphorized grain, trapping, ferreting, digging out, and fumigation. (2.) Nil. (3.) Very satisfactory work has been done. I am much indebted to section 11. (4.) Eleven. (5.) £228 17s. 6d. (6.) Seventeen reserves, mining, agricultural, and bush, some 20,750 acres; Crown runs 455, 458, and 36, with the exception of about five thousand acres mining and bush reserves. All fit for grazing. (7.) 105lb. (8.) 2lb. Phosphorized grain, 2,771lb. (9.) 440lb. (10.) Six. (11.) Six. (12.) Nil. (13.) Twenty-eight. (14.) Four. (15.) 325, with good results. (16.) 236, with good results.

From Sub-Inspector E. ORBELL, Lumsden.

(1.) Phosphorized grain, ferreting with nets, turning out the natural enemy, trapping, shooting, and hunting with dogs. (2.) Trapping, and hunting with packs of dogs, to cease. Inducement to be offered to the tenants of the pastoral Crown lands, so as to encourage them to breed and liberate the natural enemy annually. A rabbit-proof fence to be constituted a legal fence. (3.) Owing to the short time I have been in charge of this subdivision, I am unable from personal observation to report. (4.), (5.) Nil. (6.) About forty thousand acres, bush and mining reserves, hundreds, and unsold sections. Approximate area for grazing purposes, fifteen thousand acres. (7.), (8.), (9.) Nil. (10.) Two. (11.) Two. (12.), (13.) Nil. (14.) Twelve. (15.) 839 ferrets, with satisfactory results. (16.) 500 ferrets, with satisfactory results. *General Remarks.*—The natural enemy to be liberated in the spring months as far as it is practicable. Legal authority to be given to Inspectors to order occupiers of land, when necessary, to cut and trim all live fences which in any way harbour rabbits. There is no difficulty in rearing ferrets in this locality at an expense of 5s. each. The wild cats are increasing, and doing good work.

From Sub-Inspector A. WACHSMANN, Gore.

(1.) Poisoned grain, trapping, dogging, ferreting, shooting, fumigating, and digging out. (2.) That notices under clause 8 be done away with; that wire-netting fences be made a legal fence; that greater

facility be given to landholders to obtain properly-mixed poison. (3.) This has been most satisfactory. In a few localities only, where natural cover is plentiful, and in a few cases of wilful neglect, have the operations for the year not been so marked as might be wished; but, having taken most stringent measures in these latter instances, I am satisfied good results will ensue and great improvement be visible ere long. (4.) Thirty-one. (5.) £370 17s. 9d. (6.) About 100,000 acres, principally bush reserves, about twenty thousand acres being fair pastoral land, which is divided into mining and other reserves and unsold Crown lands within hundreds boundaries. (7.) 82lb. (8.) 301lb. (9.) 338lb. (10.) Twenty-one. (11.) Twenty, and one case withdrawn. (12.) Nil. (13.) S. Paterson, R. H. Kennedy, H. Styles, School Commissioners of Otago (6), Bank of New South Wales (Timaru), T. Shears, H. J. Muir, Sew Hoy, W. Saunders, C. C. Kettle, T. Horne, G. Bell. (14.) Nil. (15.) Seventeen this year. I may state that, where the surroundings are favourable, ferrets that have been liberated in previous years have done and are doing good work. (16.) Cannot say definitely, although large numbers are bred in this district and disposed of privately either in this or in other districts.

From Sub-Inspector H. HULL, Thornbury.

(1.) Phosphorized grain, working ferrets and nets, a little shooting and trapping on farms, a few packs of dogs. (2.) None. (3.) This district continues in a very satisfactory state: wild ferrets are now numerous on most of the runs, and only patch-poisoning will be requisite this winter. (4.), (5.) Nil. (6.) There are a large number of very small reserves in Aparima subdivision—none available for grazing licenses—also extensive bush reserves. (7.) 16lb. (8.) Nil. (9.) 24lb. (10.) One. (11.) One. (12.), (13.) Nil. (14.) Ten. (15.) 450. Very satisfactory. (16.) 1,115. Very satisfactory.

APPENDIX.
COMPARATIVE STATEMENT of the Number and Value of Rabbit-skins exported from the Colony during the Years ended the 31st March, 1884 to 1889.

District.	Number.						Value.					
	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.
Auckland	..	..	229,000	..	1,468	3,336	£ ..	£ ..	£ 2,182	£ ..	£ 12	£ 83
Wellington	..	889,436	1,240,223	544,712	397,988	313,441	7,901	9,220	12,550	4,325	3,428	2,671
Blenheim	..	68,736	..	..	87,716	460,479	..	848	..	..	972	5,228
Lyttelton	..	1,525,730	2,308,650	3,689,982	762,556	198,876	16,491	15,738	22,252	24,544	6,147	1,253
Oamaru	..	24,534	121,135	17,170	52,700	57,240	..	256	1,009	163	440	480
Dunedin	..	7,014,993	4,787,600	4,376,228	9,986,752	10,801,641	67,055	79,242	42,217	35,375	85,842	81,795
Bluff	..	345,636	205,764	272,600	896,691	750,448	9,230	3,346	1,637	1,889	11,388	6,141
Other ports	..	..	..	..	..	7,716	..	..	..	..	..	31
Totals	..	9,869,065	8,892,372	8,900,692	12,125,871	12,593,177	100,677	108,640	81,847	66,246	108,239	97,692

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