

1892.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE RABBIT NUISANCE.

(ANNUAL REPORTS OF INSPECTORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1892.)

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

Head Office, Live Stock Department,

Wellington, 6th July, 1892.

SIR,—

I have the honour to furnish my report for the year ended 31st March, 1892. During the above period I visited a large portion of the rabbit-infested country, and am pleased to be in a position to say that in my opinion the infested country is becoming more circumscribed. There are also good grounds for hoping that with a successful poisoning, followed up by other energetic measures, the pest will be much reduced during the winter and spring months. I regret, however, that in many instances the officers of the department do not receive that support which is expected from owners of rabbit-infested lands in their endeavours to check the evil. This is accounted for mainly by the establishment of rabbit-tinning factories, which hold out inducements to owners and others to preserve the rabbits for months previous to the opening of the factories, thereby causing themselves much loss of feed and disturbance of stock, as well as requiring the department to be continually urging on the work of destruction. This was brought to my notice very clearly on several occasions during my tour of inspection. While admitting the factories when at work, say from February till beginning of poisoning- or breeding-season, are a help towards the destruction of rabbits, at the same time I have no hesitation in saying that, owing to the existence of these factories, the means of destruction are relaxed, and a very large increase takes place during the two or three months prior to the opening of these factories, which otherwise would not be allowed to exist. The certainty of a fair return holds out such inducements to both owners and professional rabbiters that they try every means to shirk the work of destruction, and thus the evil is from year to year continued.

Natural Enemy.—Satisfactory reports still continue to be received of the work done by stoats, weasels, and ferrets. They are reported as having spread well over the country, and those seen appear in perfect health. A considerable mortality was experienced amongst the ferrets in the Kaikoura district during last winter: this is greatly to be regretted, as the satisfactory state of that district is almost, if not wholly, dependent on their work.

If the proposed experimental laboratory in Sydney is established, advantage should be taken to try some experiments with a view to finding out a remedy for distemper.

It is strongly recommended that settlers and others should keep a few tame ferrets and a supply of nets for the purpose of hunting where there are burrows or other holes: if this is systematically done, and the holes afterwards filled up, the trouble would be to a great extent got rid of. Bisulphide of carbon, trapping, poisoning, dogging, and shooting are all resorted to to try and reduce the pest. The bisulphide of carbon and trapping are both objectionable, it being impossible for the natural enemy to increase while these means are continued.

Wire-netting.—A considerable extent has been erected during the past year, principally in Marlborough and Nelson, and is found of immense service in checking the spread of the rabbits. The experience already gained of fencing points to it as being one of the most effectual means of stopping the pest, therefore every encouragement should be held out for its further use.

In the Auckland Province, generally, the rabbits do not seem to increase to any great extent. In the King-country the number of skins purchased during last year from the Natives shows an increase, and although, when lately through a portion of it, very few rabbits could be seen, yet traces were clearly visible. If this country could be well poisoned it is confidently expected a great reduction would result, but the difficulties at present in the way preclude taking this course.

Hawke's Bay.—The Rabbit Board administer the Act in this district, and so far are reported as doing satisfactory work, being fully alive to the necessity of seeing the rabbits are destroyed. They employ several inspectors, as well as caretakers for the rabbit-fence which has been erected on the southern boundary of the district.

Wellington—West Coast.—During the past year the North Wairarapa Rabbit Board of Trustees petitioned the Governor to abolish the Board, and the country lately under its jurisdiction has consequently been taken up by this department. The rabbits are reported to be numerous on portions of the district lately under its control, but outside that boundary to be well in hand. On the west coast rabbits are spread over the coast lands as far as up Foxton, also a few patches further north, and where seen the settlers are taking active steps to destroy them.

Marlborough—Nelson.—The Awatere Rabbit Board exercise the powers of the Act over a considerable portion of Marlborough. While some properties are in a satisfactory state others are very badly infested. A large extent of fencing has been erected by individual owners, but nominally under the Board's supervision, the arrangement being that the Board subsidises ratepayers to the extent of £1 for £1 on the value of fencing erected, but which must not exceed a certain limit. The erection of so many fences has proved of considerable help, but the want of a general scheme is greatly against the systematic destruction of the rabbits. The Board have been notified that more energetic measures must be taken, and it is reported that they have already become alive to the necessity of being more vigilant. The unoccupied Crown lands within this district have been satisfactorily disposed of, and will for the future relieve the department of the cost of rabbiting. In Nelson district a few patches of rabbits exist, and are being attended to.

Canterbury—Kaikoura.—South of the Clarence, and along the seaboard to the Hurunui, very few rabbits are to be seen; and this applies equally to the country which a few years ago was very badly infested. The satisfactory state of this district must be attributed to the good work done by ferrets, and which I have already alluded to. Further inland, towards the head of the Clarence, rabbits are still numerous, and instructions have been given to see that energetic steps are taken to destroy them.

During the last sitting of Parliament a deputation from the Hurunui Rabbit Board waited upon the Government and urged the necessity of assisting the efforts of Messrs. Rutherford and McArthur in the erection of a rabbit-proof fence from the end of the Gorge Creek fence, following the Waiau-ua to Maling's Pass, and there joining the Clarence fence. The members of the deputation were examined before the Stock Committees of both Houses, and on their recommendation a sum was placed on the supplementary estimates to provide for the carrying-out of this work, as well as for the erection of a fence from the end of Messrs. Malloch and Lance's proposed fence to the Hurunui River. Before finally agreeing to the proposal, I was instructed to visit and report on the proposed line and the general state of the country. I found that on the country on the infested side of the river, and lying between the Clarence fence and the Waiau-ua, a considerable sum of money had been expended during the past two years; others, however, deemed that more energetic means were required to prevent the further spread of rabbits into Canterbury, and they therefore proposed to do this by the erection of a fence as stated. After considerable and unavoidable delay this has now been arranged, but, instead of following the route as at first proposed, viz., following the Waiau-ua, it has been decided to follow the Hope to the Boyle, and there for the present end in the bush. This, assisted by the erection of some small pieces of fencing up the Waiau-ua to Steyning Creek, and also the erection of a considerable length on the infested side by Messrs. McArthur Brothers (St. James's Station), and Acton Adams (Hopefield), will, it is expected, effectually check any further inroads. The rabbits cannot be said to be numerous on this country, but to prevent any further increase it is now receiving a systematic poisoning, which will be followed up by shooting and dogging.

The fence near the Hurunui is also now in course of erection, and when finished will completely stop any rabbits from getting into the Black Peaks country. This is a continuation of Messrs. Mallock and Lance's fence, lately erected, and which requires special mention, as being without doubt the most substantial fence yet constructed, and a credit to all concerned. It consists of $1\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{3}{8}$ standards, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$ strainers, $1\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{4}$ intermediates, three No. 4 wires, and barb wire on top; $1\frac{1}{4} \times 42 \times 14$ gauge netting, with a narrow piece projecting from top of netting on outside, about 9in. wide, attached to small arms from each standard, and a barb wire on outside to prevent stock rubbing against it. The cost, however, has been much above what has hitherto been considered liberal, being somewhere about £230 per mile. This might be somewhat reduced by some slight modification in the size of the material, and which would not interfere with the general strength of the fence.

A further check is in course of erection by Messrs. Dalgety and Co., Balmoral Station, who are erecting some thirty miles of fencing, from the Pahau to the Mandamus. Further south, a few rabbits of the tame variety are still to be met with in places along the plains till the Waitaki is reached. In the Hakateramea district a considerable increase has suddenly been found to exist: the owners, however, are now alive to the necessity of stringent measures being taken, and to see these are carried out an extra inspector has been specially appointed for that district. The South Canterbury fence is reported in good order, and is believed to be doing good service in preventing the spread of the rabbits. A few rabbits are reported north of the fence, and several informations have been laid against owners, as it is recognised that a further increase of rabbits in this direction would be disastrous.

In many parts of Otago the rabbits are still numerous: this may be accounted for by the absence of floods, and owing to the dry seasons experienced there for some years back, which allowed them to breed freely.

In Southland and in the Lakes district there seems to be a very satisfactory alteration, with the exception of isolated patches, many of which were found to be in close proximity to a factory. It may be said that the rabbits are now fairly checked in the country right through to the Waitaki.

It was reported that last season there was a difficulty in procuring men for rabbiting in the up-country districts.

I beg to append the Inspectors' reports on their respective districts.

JOHN D. RITCHIE, Chief Inspector.

AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

EXCEPT in the King-country there is no alteration to report on the rabbit nuisance.

Settlers appear able to keep rabbits so much in hand that they cannot be said to be existing as a nuisance in this district. There were 129,689 skins received from the King-country

during the year ending 31st March, 1892. This is an increase of 21,469; but of this one-half may be put down to more general work being done by the Maoris. The area infested in the King-country is increasing but very slowly.

Auckland, 31st March, 1892.

E. CLIFTON, Inspector.

NAPIER DISTRICT.

RABBITS in one or two parts of the district are increasing slightly, but there is no cause for alarm.

The general methods of destruction are hunting with dogs, shooting, trapping, and, in the proper season, poisoning. The natural enemy is a very valuable aid in their destruction. I think we must rely on rabbit-netting as the great mainstay of the future.

R. C. PASLEY, Inspector.

WELLINGTON—WEST COAST.

A THIRD season of sparse rainfall and abundance of food has been in the favour of the spread of rabbits.

Notwithstanding this, I am glad to be able to report that, so far as the portion of this district which has remained under the absolute charge of the Stock Department is concerned, the efforts of the settlers have been attended with success; and I am satisfied that in this portion there has been a considerable reduction in the number of the pest.

In the district which was placed under the control of the North Wairarapa Rabbit Board, and especially in the centre portion thereof, rabbits are still numerous.

The Board did excellent work during poisoning season, and for some time after they continued to compel owners to destroy; but during the early summer months the Board, having achieved the introduction of a considerable number of the natural enemy (which was the avowed object of the constitution of the district), reduced its staff of Inspectors, and has now been abolished. During this period rabbits were afforded an opportunity of again making headway, especially in that portion of the district more seriously affected. I trust, however, that next year I may be able to report more favourably on this particular part of the district.

The usual remedies have been adopted by landowners; but a noticeable feature in the methods of destruction has been the unusually large use made of carbon bisulphide for fumigating. I cannot, however, urge too strongly the necessity of exercising the greatest care in the selection of men for working with this substance, and for trapping. In careless or ignorant hands these methods may prove extremely disastrous in injuring or destroying the natural enemy; therefore none but the most expert and competent hands should be intrusted with this work.

In addition to the number of the natural enemies previously reported by me as having been introduced by the Rabbit Board, there have since been imported to the district 237 stoats, 610 weasels, and 699 ferrets. I am satisfied these are increasing and doing good work, and will ultimately, provided no serious epidemic occurs, prove of immense service in controlling the pest.

Wellington, April, 1892.

JOHN DRUMMOND, Inspector.

WANGANUI DISTRICT.

THE rabbits in this district are confined to the coast-line between the Turakina and Manawatu Rivers (with the exception of a very few further north). They are very thinly scattered over the ground, and the chief mode in use for destroying them is by dog, gun, and digging out burrows, which is very easily done, the ground being of such a sandy nature.

The Manawatu Rabbit Extermination Society are doing very useful work. They have paid for 1,719 skins since last December; they are at present paying 4d. per skin, and hope shortly to raise the price to 6d., and will continue so to increase the price till the rabbits are almost extinct. With the exception of a block on the coast-line between the Rangitikei Rivers, there is a marked diminution in the number of rabbits. It is very difficult in this district to make the settlers realise the danger arising from the presence of rabbits, as they declare they are no more numerous than they were twenty years ago.

On the whole, I think, the work of destroying rabbits has been fairly satisfactory, although, as in every district, there are a few landowners who require constant looking up. The laying of poisoned grain is not practised here, and, with the exception of one or two places, would, I think, be of very little service.

Stoats and weasels are frequently reported as making their appearance on this coast, and I much fear they are promptly despatched when they do so.

Wanganui, 6th June, 1892.

RICHARD HULL, Inspector.

MARLBOROUGH—NELSON DISTRICT.

NEARLY all the rabbit-infested country is in the Marlborough District, and under the jurisdiction of the Awatere Rabbit Board. They issue notices to the ratepayers to destroy rabbits, and are satisfied with whatever means are taken. Fairly good work has been done throughout the district by the settlers—poisoning, trapping, shooting, digging out, &c.—and something like three hundred miles of wire-netting fencing has been erected, or is in course of erection; and from my own knowledge and general information, rabbits are not so numerous as last year, and have been greatly reduced on what were badly infested blocks three years ago. The natural enemy, stoats, weasels, ferrets, and cats, have been liberated on several runs, but so far have not made much impression on the rabbits. Not until the settlers took vigorous steps by poisoning, trapping, shooting, digging out fumigating, and erecting wire-netting fencing were the rabbits reduced in numbers.

30th May, 1892.

T. G. RICHARDSON, Inspector.

CANTERBURY—KAIKOURA DISTRICT.

DURING the autumn of last year distemper appeared among the ferrets, which were very numerous throughout the district, and reduced them to a very low ebb. This was followed by an exceptionally fine winter, during which there was hardly any cessation in breeding. This gave the pest a good start. In some localities, also, the poison was a partial failure. This was very perceptible on the southern portion of the Clarence Run, and also in some blocks on the coast. Energetic measures have, however, been taken by the large majority of the settlers, and have been followed by satisfactory results.

An increase of rabbits is noticeable on the Clarence Run from the Gore Creek to the Winterburn, for the reason above given; it will, however, be dealt with as soon as expedient, and the work followed up by shooting and the natural enemy.

Owing to the great diminution in the number of ferrets, rabbits have shown up where the cover is heavy on portions of Swynecombe and Linton. There is also an isolated colony of rabbits on Mr. Stace's. These rabbits have crossed the range from the Clarence, and are of both varieties, the silver-grey and the brown rabbit. They are not likely to cross on to the Humpback, the nearest clear land, and can be easily dealt with by poison this coming winter.

The district, taken as a whole, is freer from rabbits than it has ever been, and, as ferrets are beginning to show up again, and energetic measures will be taken through this coming winter, I consider it to be in a very satisfactory state. The reserves and unoccupied Crown lands which have been dealt with by the department have never been so free from the pest.

Stoats and Weasels.—Though none of these animals have been liberated in the Kaikoura District, they are getting fairly numerous from end to end, having come from both the Amuri and Awatere Districts. Several landowners and their employes have reported to me that they have been seen doing good work. I picked up a full-grown rabbit freshly killed by either a stoat or weasel.

Polecats.—I would again draw your attention to the great benefit which is certain to result by the introduction of this animal for the purpose of crossing with the ferret; both constitution and physical power would be improved and the chances of distemper much lessened.

Cats.—A great amount of good work is done by this animal, but also considerable harm by the injudicious introduction and liberation of half-grown or highly domesticated cats; also by crowding in boxes, which frequently has resulted in distemper.

Means of destruction in use in Kaikoura are, winter poisoning, the ferret, cat, killing with gun, net, and dog; and, in some few instances, disastrous use is made of traps, which are most deadly in localities where the natural enemy has been liberated. The legal right to the traps is made use of to the great loss of settlers who have systematically been liberating either ferret, cat, stoat, or weasel; and I would strongly urge upon you to consider the advisability of having this stopped by legislation.

Blenheim, 21st May, 1892.

JOHN MOORE, Inspector.

Amuri Subdivision.

I FIND rabbits very numerous in some parts of the district outside the Clarence netting fence.

Inside the fence rabbits are scattered in many places, and if good work is not done during this winter they will become numerous next season. A gang of men are now engaged poisoning this country. It would be advisable to continue the erection of the netting fence up the Hope, to prevent the further spread of the rabbits, before too late.

Waiau, 30th May, 1892.

W. A. SCAIFE, Inspector.

RABBITS bred from the ordinary tame rabbit exist in most, if not all of the river-beds in this district, but only to a limited extent, and are certainly not increasing; they are, in fact, in far less numbers in the central part of the district than they were some years back—notably on the Waimakiriri islands and banks, and on the Peninsula, and along the Rakaia banks.

With regard to the northern part of the district, I may quote the following paragraph from Inspector Cunningham's report: "Two men appointed by the Hurunui Rabbit Board went systematically over the runs between the Waipara and Hurunui Rivers, the sea, and the North Road, between 25th May and 31st August, 1891 (three months continual work). They only got 205 rabbits, of which three (got near the Lower Hurunui Bridge) were silver-greys, and the others were the common light-brown sort."

With regard to the southern part of the district, I would quote the following extracts from Inspector Rees' report: "Rabbits are, if anything, on the decrease; there were always a few on the lines of the river-beds, but now no amount of hunting or shooting will, for certain, secure one. On Mount Possession and the scrub opposite Mesopotamia hardly a rabbit is now to be found. I only saw one, and very few traces, where I know a few years since fifty were killed. At Lake Heron and the Smite and under the hills I found old traces, but no new ones. The only place I consider to hold rabbits is the upper end of Graham's old run (now owned by Mr. Dove); and even here, when I lately visited that run, Mr. Dove, his musterers, and men who were fencing in the bush, all report the rabbits are decreasing."

Christchurch, 8th June, 1892.

R. F. HOLDERNESS, Inspector.

Timaru District.

HAVING only taken over the Timaru District last July, I am not in a position to state definitely as to general increase or otherwise of the pest. From what I can learn, however, I believe that whilst rabbits are not so numerous as they were, they are more widely spread, and can now be found in every river-bed in South Canterbury and on most of the ranges. I have no doubt in my

own mind that the Otago grey rabbit exists more or less all over the Hakateramea district, and that in other parts the tame rabbit which was turned out many years ago is degenerating and assuming the habits and hardihood of the common wild rabbit.

As far as the Hakateramea portion of the district is concerned, the rabbits have a considerable hold, and it will require the utmost care to prevent them overrunning the country. On the Front Downs there is at present only a sprinkling of the pest, and with ordinary care they should not increase. I have endeavoured to get all the larger landowners to keep men constantly on the watch and at once destroy any stray rabbits, with considerable success; the river-beds, which are broad, shingly, and more or less covered with gorse and broom, being the principal source of danger.

The evidence of those occupying country immediately adjoining the South Canterbury rabbit-fence is unanimous that it has been a very great protection, and there is not a single authentic case of rabbits passing over or through it.

Timaru, 31st May, 1892.

ALFRED DOUGLASS, Inspector.

OTAGO.

Oamaru District.

THE means adopted for the destruction of the pest have been—poisoned grain, trapping, shooting, ferreting, and dogging. Ferrets have also been liberated, and are to be found in any part of the district. As those seen in their wild state are strong and healthy, there is now doubt but that, when once acclimatised, they will do well at large, and must assist materially in keeping down the rabbit pest.

Weasels seem to be increasing, as several have been seen on the Papakaio Plain, and on the Waitaki River banks.

I would strongly recommend the importation of stoats and weasels, the breeding and liberating of ferrets, and that stringent measures be provided for the protection of these animals from rabbiters and others whose interests are opposed to their increase.

I desire to call attention to the serious spread of gorse and broom on public roads, river-banks, and private property; such places harbour rabbits to a great extent, and it is found extremely difficult to cope with the pest under such circumstances.

During the past year fair progress has been made, and a decrease noticed in some parts of the district.

There is a desire on the part of many landowners in the Waihemo district to dispense with winter poisoning, so as not to interfere with the operations of the rabbit-factory at Dunback. As poisoned grain is the chief factor in coping with the rabbit pest, any departure from this method of destruction may lead to a serious increase of the pest.

Oamaru, 31st May, 1892.

W. MILLER, Inspector.

Dunedin District.

I AM pleased to be able to report a very considerable decrease in the number of rabbits in the district lately under my charge, more particularly in the Strath Taieri and Maniototo districts. This decrease, I think, is to a great extent due to the action of the department in insisting upon the poisoning being immediately followed up by shooting, trapping, ferreting, dogging, &c. These are the general means employed in this district for the destruction of the pest.

Natural Enemy.—Ferrets do not seem to thrive in this country, owing probably to the scarcity of water in a dry season; and many owners, after giving the breeding of ferrets a fair trial, have abandoned it, but keep a few for working. Cats and large hawks seem to do well, and the latter have increased very much during the past two seasons.

Waiatu, 31st May, 1892.

W. A. SCAIFE, Inspector.

Means adopted for destroying Rabbits.—Poisoning in the winter by means of phosphorized oats; at other times of the year, trapping, dogging, ferreting, digging-out, and filling-in burrows.

Recommendations.—Owners should be compelled by Act to eradicate spreading gorse and keep neglected fences in order.

Progress made.—Fair progress was made, considering the favourableness of the year for rabbits increasing; no young ones perished from wet. The high country is comparatively free; but in many parts of the low country, especially where there are gorse fences with sod banks, and along the edges of bush, they are exceedingly troublesome to keep in check.

General Remarks.—During previous years a number of ferrets, altogether about a thousand, were turned out by the department on an exceedingly infested piece of land between mouth of Catlin's River and False Island, a bit of open land between bush and foreshore (a complete warren); for a time they seemed to be a check upon the increase, but this spring and summer the rabbits were about as numerous as ever. The ferrets have spread away into the bush; only an odd one is to be seen.

Weasels are spreading throughout the Clutha, and are frequently seen by the settlers, especially in the Catlin's Bush country; from their being seen so frequently, they evidently are increasing rapidly. A short time ago I noticed, a few miles from Balclutha, a fine stoat cross the road. I am of opinion it will be some time before the natural enemy has any appreciable effect in keeping down the pest, as at present they are not numerous enough, and their living is so easily procured, living no doubt on mice, rats, birds, &c., as well as upon rabbits; but from the way they are spreading throughout the country they evidently thrive, and in time, when they become numerous, there is not the least doubt they will be a great assistance.

A factory in a district, no doubt, whilst at work is the means of a number of rabbits being destroyed, but it also has the tendency to make owners farm them during the rest of the year, especially among small owners.

Dunedin, 2nd June, 1892.

BLAIR FULLARTON, Inspector.

Clyde District.

THE means adopted for the destruction of rabbits are—phosphorized grain in winter, trapping, ferreting, fumigating, and flooding out the burrows in summer.

The summer being in before taking charge of this district, I am not in a position to say whether the rabbits are on the increase or decrease, but from inquiries made throughout the district am of opinion they are not so numerous as last year. There are some localities where they are still very numerous, but on the whole there has been good work done this summer. I have hopes, with a good poisoning season, and the work of destruction carried on in the early spring, to see the pest considerably reduced in numbers. The ferrets are doing good work at the head of the Wanaka, and are increasing fast.

I would suggest that encouragement be given to landowners to turn out ferrets in large numbers in spring when the rabbits start breeding. I should likewise be pleased to see trained ferrets take the place of traps, where practicable.

Clyde, 24th May, 1892.

A. IRONSIDE, Inspector.

Tapanui District.

RABBITS, on the whole, show a slight decrease for the last twelve months. They are thick in patches, but there is not that wholesale destruction to crops and grass that was so common a short time back. The few cases of crop-destruction that I have had to deal with is where cultivation joins rough country—that is, ground bad with rocks, under-runners, and scrub. These places are hard to keep clear, even when landowners are using their utmost endeavours. Wire-netting the fences is the only way to cope with rabbits in ground like this.

The means adopted for destruction of rabbits in my district are—poisoned grain, trapping, exterminating with poisonous gases, working ferrets in hand, shooting, and dogging. A real good poisoning in the most suitable winter months, followed immediately by other means, seems to me the best method of coping with the pest. I am of opinion that ferrets and cats, worked in a proper manner, that is, turned out in numbers and the locality protected, would clear rough country.

Brooksdale Station turned out large numbers of ferrets on their back country (a rough barren place, infested with rabbits) some years ago. Now the rabbits are scarce, the ferrets numerous, and the grass in splendid order. Moa Flat Station did the same with their back country, and a most pronounced improvement has taken place. Ferrets make no headway on low country, for the simple reason they are trapped before they can increase.

Personally, I think poison and ferrets in hand for low country, and poison, ferrets, and cats turned loose in numbers on high country. Weasels are becoming numerous about Tapanui.

Tapanui, 25th May, 1892.

R. H. HASSALL, Inspector.

Invercargill District.

ALTHOUGH the last three springs have been exceptionally favourable for the breeding of the rabbit, they have been kept down. Everyone is doing good work, with the exception of a few dilatory persons whom I have had before the Resident Magistrates' Courts in their respective districts, and which has proved a good warning to others. I trust that in a very short time, by making everyone do good work, there will be a very marked difference all over my district. A proof that the rabbits are decreasing is that the rabbit-factories have not been receiving anything like the supply this year that they did last.

There has been a deal of correspondence in the papers with regard to postponing the general poisoning till much later in the season. This, I consider, would not do in my district. Of course you cannot make any fixed rule when poisoning should start, as the season, locality, &c., has to be taken into consideration. But I do not believe in putting it off too late, as the country cannot get a good poisoning before the spring sets in, and the rabbits are breeding on the warm low ground. I find that July is the best month to poison all the low-lying country, as the frosts have by then cut down what extra feed there is, and settlers have plenty of time to go over their ground again where rabbits are showing up and give it a second poisoning before the grass has made a start.

The means of destruction were—poisoning, ferreting, trapping, dogging, digging out, and fumigating.

If ferrets were liberated in the spring and early summer, in certain localities, they would do an unusual deal of good, but I do not believe in turning them out in the autumn at all.

Invercargill.

H. T. TURNER, Inspector.

APPENDIX.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT of the Number and Value of Rabbit-skins exported from the Colony during the Years ended the 31st March, 1884, to 1892.

District.	Number.										Value.								
	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.	1892.	
Auckland ..	..	..	229,000	..	1,468	3,336	5,309	..	..	£	..	2,182	..	12	33	46	..	£
Wellington	706,894	889,436	1,240,223	544,712	337,988	313,441	583,198	512,373	939,788	7,901	9,220	12,550	4,325	3,428	2,671	4,299	3,732	7,394	
Blenheim ..	..	68,736	..	..	87,716	460,479	700,471	730,780	..	..	848	..	..	972	5,228	7,474	7,467	..
Wairau and Picton	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	794,249	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8,520
Lyttelton ..	1,745,954	1,525,730	2,308,650	3,689,982	762,556	198,876	37,848	86,798	1,114,154	16,491	15,728	22,252	24,544	6,147	1,253	331	878	11,673	
Oamaru ..	..	24,534	121,135	17,170	52,700	57,240	152,550	132,680	54,300	..	256	1,009	163	440	480	1,339	1,407	562
Dunedin ..	6,514,884	7,014,993	4,787,600	4,376,228	9,986,752	10,801,641	7,929,493	9,538,272	9,707,048	67,055	79,242	42,217	35,375	85,842	81,795	66,256	83,891	81,221	
Bluff ..	924,609	345,636	205,764	272,600	896,691	750,448	876,820	2,308,130	1,913,482	9,230	3,346	1,637	1,839	11,388	6,141	7,416	21,090	18,529	
Other ports	..	..	..	..	..	7,716	9,528	3,540	2,500	..	..	..	..	..	31	57	22	21
Totals ..	9,892,341	9,869,065	8,892,372	8,900,692	12,125,871	12,593,177	10,295,217	13,312,573	14,525,521	100,677	108,640	81,847	66,246	108,229	97,632	87,218	118,487	127,920	

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation (not given); printing (1,500 copies), £5 5s.

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