

(7) *Tending of Indigenous Forests*.—Release cuttings for liberation of kauri advance growth were carried out over 95 acres in Auckland Conservancy. Thinnings, with harvesting, have been carried out in beech stands in Nelson, Westland, Canterbury, and Southland Conservancies, the species represented being red, hard, black, and silver beech.

(8) *Tending of Exotic Forests*.—Areas dealt with in the course of normal tending operations are shown below for the past three years; but more detail is given for the current year in Appendix II, which also gives statistics for earlier years. The area clear-felled (shown in this section for convenience) includes 172 acres of salvage of wind-thrown trees.

Year.			Release Cutting.	Low Pruning.	High Pruning.	Thinning.	Clear-felling.
			Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1946-47	..	..	677	6,556	932	1,055	601
1947-48	..	..	1,389	6,743	1,983	1,245	481
1948-49	..	..	2,722	6,728	2,247	2,094	651

FOREST PROTECTION

(1) *Animal Damage: General*.—Opossums, rabbits, and deer remain the most serious forest pests. Other animals such as pigs, goats, and wild cattle are also causing damage, but this is satisfactorily limited by existing control measures. The recorded numbers of vermin destroyed in State forests for the past three years are as follows:—

Year.			Rabbits and Hares.	Opossums.	Deer (All Species).	Pigs.	Goats.	Others.
1946-47	..	..	34,532	4,329	1,534	1,538	238	..
1947-48	..	..	139,507	6,042	2,956	3,225	294	145
1948-49	..	..	99,411	69,968	2,785	3,419	510	6,614*

* Includes 4,937 rats.

(2) *Opossums*.—Opossums have aroused concern following reports of a considerable increase in their population and range, and the damage done, in both Islands. Exotic forests have been affected most, the young shoots of several species being chewed and nibbled off. In indigenous forest a preference for young shoots of rata has been reported by parties of the national forest survey. Attempts to control opossums by poisoning to supplement contemporary trapping methods are being made in Nelson and Southland Conservancies. The large increase in the number of opossums killed (preceding paragraph) comes mainly from the inclusion this year of skins taken by trappers in State forests in the Wellington Conservancy.

(3) *Rabbits*.—Rabbits remain a serious problem at Gwavas Forest, where they were responsible for losses up to 60 per cent. in the 1948 planting. It is anticipated that, despite netting of plantation areas and continued rabbiting, they will be a major establishment problem on Esk Forest, in Hawkes Bay. Rabbits are still very numerous in Southland Conservancy, especially on marginal lands adjoining Naseby, Berwick, Herbert, Pebbly Hills, and the Longwood Forests. An intensive programme of trapping and poisoning on all affected forests is being pursued with good results.

The Rabbit Destruction Council, which has now been operating for a full year, has already achieved a measure of uniformity in methods of administration and attack upon this pest. Though lands of the Crown are outside the jurisdiction of the Council, excepting with the consent of the Minister concerned, the Council is assured of the co-operation of the Forest Service.