

An endeavour has been made to revive the Inangahua Society, but little interest has been aroused. The Nelson Society has petitioned for the inclusion within its district of a portion of Inangahua. The matter is still under consideration.

A long-standing dispute between the Otago and Southland societies was brought to a head by the latter petitioning for an alteration of boundaries that would, *inter alia*, include in Southland the whole of the Maitai River. After considerable correspondence, in the course of which the Department endeavoured, without success, to arrange a conference between both societies to agree upon a new boundary, it was decided to appoint a Commission, consisting of a Magistrate, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Dunedin, and the District Valuer, Milton, as official members, and one representative of each of the two societies. The Southland Society then took up the extraordinary attitude of objecting to the official members on the ground that they were resident in Otago, and declined to be represented. Under the circumstances it was decided to take no further action.

Amended rules of the Buller Society were deposited as required by the Act.

Shooting Season.—Game was plentiful, open seasons being declared in all districts. It is pleasing to note that the Department's policy of strictly protecting paradise duck for a number of years has been rewarded by the increase of these birds to such an extent as to warrant short open seasons being declared in the Ashburton, Lakes, North Canterbury, South Canterbury, Waitaki, and Waimate Acclimatization Districts. Licenses to sell game were not issued, and requests for permission to sell game for patriotic purposes were declined.

Importation of Frozen or Chilled Game.—An inquiry was received from an Auckland firm as to the legality of importing frozen or chilled game for sale to clubs and hotels. The legal position is that such game may not be sold except during the period within which it is lawful to sell game killed in the Dominion, which, even when authorized, must be between the 1st June and 31st July. For several seasons past game-selling licenses have not been issued.

Deer.—A special season for culling purposes was declared in the Rotorua district. In the Otago District protection was removed from fallow deer in certain localities at Tapanui where they have proved destructive. At the request of the Southland Acclimatization Society Mr. Moorhouse was sent to Stewart Island to report on the deer there. He found them plentiful enough to warrant a season being declared. Accordingly certain portions of the island were opened to a limited number of stalkers. The question of augmenting food-supplies by deer flesh was considered, but the cost of marketing makes impracticable any action on a large scale. A little venison was, however, sold by an acclimatization society in aid of patriotic funds.

Sanctuaries and Protection of Birds.—Two new sanctuaries were declared. The very severe winter of 1918 caused a decrease in numbers of many of the smaller birds in the Goulard Downs sanctuary. The caretaker reports that there will, however, be abundant food this winter.

Protection has been removed from birds as follows: Californian quail (in Murchison County); hawks of all species; the kea; black shag, white-throated shag, and sea-shag.

The rapidity with which many native birds die out has been exemplified recently by the unsuccessful efforts of Mr. E. F. Stead, of Christchurch, to secure a few pairs of brown ducks for liberation on the Avon. A few years ago they were plentiful, but now it would appear that only in the far north and south is there any likelihood of their being found.

The Tuatara.—Good work has been done by the keepers on the various island sanctuaries in destroying cats, hawks, and goats. The small island to the north of Somes Island, in Wellington Harbour, has been declared a sanctuary, and it is proposed to place a few tuataras on it.

Opossums.—A considerable volume of correspondence has taken place between the Department and acclimatization societies during the past year on the subject of opossums. The general desire of these bodies now is that there should be a definite season each year during which opossums may be killed, instead of, as at present, its being a question of their absolute protection or liberty to kill them indiscriminately. With a keen demand for the skins there is much poaching in protected districts, but legislation will be required before there can be any satisfactory solution of the present difficulties, which are that under the present law a shooting season can only be arranged if opossums are declared game, and that if they are to be declared game it must be for the whole of New Zealand. That is not at all desirable. Again, the Animals Protection Act provides only for the shooting season to run between the 1st May and 31st July. Opossum-skins are not at their best until late in the winter. Also, trapping game is prohibited at present.

(4.) *Gaming Act.*

Regulations.—Acting on a suggestion of the Department, the majority of the racing and trotting clubs to which totalizator permits are issued have remade their regulations under section 33 (2) of the Gaming Act, 1908, to specify in greater detail classes of undesirables whose presence on race-courses is not to be countenanced.

Totalizator Inspection.—A new departure was the institution of a system of Government totalizator inspection. Mr. Kelleher, Chief Clerk, was appointed Inspector, with other officers of the Department as his deputies. A Government representative has visited every totalizator meeting held during the present racing season. The Inspector's report—a most interesting document, giving particulars of investments, Government revenue from investment and dividend tax and tax on stakes, and showing to what a large sum fractions amount in the course of a season—is printed in the appendix hereto.

From the first the racing and the trotting clubs generally welcomed the proposal. Now that the clubs and the public have seen the system in practice it is safe to assert that neither would care to see it abolished. It gives the public an assurance that the figures displayed on the face of the machine