

consensus of opinion is that the vaccines have not come up to expectations. In summing up the position with reference to their use the fact remains that although they have been in use for many years their application has not become universal, as would have been the case had they been successful preventive agents. So far the Department is unable to advocate their use either as preventive or curative agents.

Congenital Diseases.—(a) Contagious abortion: This disease, although in existence in most of the dairying districts throughout the Dominion, is not the dreaded scourge it was a number of years ago. A few herds may suffer severely, but in the majority of cases they get through the season with comparatively slight losses. This is no doubt due to the fact that the majority of our herds have acquired immunity, for the time being, at any rate.

(b) Temporary sterility: In this complaint, although the majority of the cows may prove in calf before the end of the season, yet the fact that they keep continually returning to the bull for a period and do not get in calf until late in the season is a source of loss and annoyance to the dairy-farmer, as such animals do not come to profit at a time when they afford the greatest source of income to their owners. The condition is one that is fully occupying the resources of the Laboratory and field officers of this Department in order that a remedy may be found. The experience so far has been, however, that an agent which has given satisfactory results when tried on one herd may prove an utter failure in the next. Hence research work has to be continued. The common practice of letting the bull run with the cows cannot be too strongly condemned when this trouble is present in the herd, as not only does it wear out the bull, but it lessens the chance of the cows conceiving.

Malignant Growths.—During the year 415 head of cattle were condemned by Inspectors for malignant growths, an increase of seventy-three over last year's figures. In the majority of cases the diagnosis was confirmed by laboratory examination.

Parasitic Diseases (Sheep and Calves).—Although a number of cases have been reported, principally from the North Island, with the exception of fifty yearling heifers that died on one property no serious mortality has been attributed to this. The worst-affected centres are the King-country and Hawke's Bay. In a portion of the latter district fluke is also prevalent, and control measures are in operation under the direction of the officers at the Wallaceville Laboratory in conjunction with the district Veterinarian.

Ante-partum Paralysis and Extrusion of the Vagina.—The only cases reported were from the Amberley and Lincoln districts, in both of which a number of cases were seen. This is the second season in which little has been heard with regard to this condition. The trouble is no doubt due to the good condition of the pastures on which flocks were kept. Sheep that are well fed and allowed to become too fat before lambing are the usual victims of this trouble. Good management can prevent it.

Ophthalmia (Temporary Blindness in Sheep).—This complaint was reported rather common in the Wairarapa, Stratford, and Marlborough districts. Investigations under way at the Laboratory suggest that the disease is contagious.

LICE IN SHEEP.

The remarks made in my last annual report still apply—viz., that sheep affected with lice are still too numerous, and far too many prosecutions for exposing lice-infested sheep at saleyards have had to be taken. Notwithstanding the numerous prosecutions the position has not improved, and it would seem that if the position is to be remedied more drastic action is required. It was also pointed out in the last report that the Inspector has the power to order the withdrawal of lice-infested sheep from sale, and with the view to stopping the practice it is proposed that all Inspectors be instructed to see that such sheep are withdrawn from sale. It does not follow that when this action is taken it will relieve the owner of the sheep from prosecution.

RENAL CONGESTION AFFECTING LAMBS.

Odd cases have been reported from most sheep-farming districts in the Dominion. In the Central Otago, Southland, and Oamaru districts the disease during the early spring months was more or less prevalent and a considerable amount of mortality ensued. Officers of this Department, aided by the hearty co-operation of the farmers, are carrying on an exhaustive investigation, with a view to determining from an exact scientific standpoint the cause of the trouble. From the practical point of view it can be well described as a result of overnutrition, or of an unbalanced highly nutritive ration. Such an investigation must of necessity occupy an extended period. This investigational work will, if necessary, be extended to other districts. It is hoped that the knowledge gained will be of benefit to the sheep-farming community throughout the Dominion. Meanwhile practical precautionary measures need always to be observed.

CATTLE-TICK.

The infestation of stock with cattle-tick within area A, with the exception of the Tauranga and Coromandel districts, has been much lighter than for some years past. The cold season experienced may account for this to some extent. There are, however, other factors at work, such as picking and spraying. It is also realized that better farming methods, such as top-dressing, keeping the roughage eaten out, ploughing, and burning, are all factors which assist in reducing the ticks to a minimum. The hearty co-operation of the settlers is asked for in this respect. If owners will individually see that their stock is kept free from ticks, and that their pastures are kept free from roughage, which affords a breeding-ground for the tick, it will go a long way towards the eradication of the pest. Where dairying is carried on, the method of control is comparatively simple. It is on the grazing-runs, where stock are seen only at irregular intervals, that difficulty is experienced.