

explaining the method appeared in the *Journal*. In this connection the District Superintendent, Wellington, remarks as follows :—

In the control of weeds, chiefly blackberry, goats have in some districts been a great assistance, and are being brought more into use for this purpose each year. In Nelson, Marlborough, and Taranaki these animals have been extensively used for weed-control for several years, and within the past four years several thousand goats have been imported into the Wairoa County from other districts by settlers who have faith in them as blackberry-destroyers. In Wairoa they are reported to have done, and are still doing, excellent work on this weed. In Nelson, Marlborough, and Taranaki landowners have demonstrated that infested areas can be cleared of blackberry and other weeds by means of goats, provided they are properly controlled and folded on the infested areas.

Ragwort appears to have been less troublesome than in some previous years. A considerable number of settlers are now stocking up with sheep, and this is proving the most satisfactory method of checking the spread of ragwort.

During the last session of Parliament the Noxious Weeds Amendment Act, 1927, was placed on the statute-book. This Act, *inter alia*, relieves the Department of the control of weeds in urban areas, and places on the local authorities of such areas the responsibility of administering the Act in the districts under their jurisdiction. Another amendment, and an important one, is the new definition of the word "clear," an adjustment which will strengthen the hands of those administering the Act.

SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION.

The work connected with the inspection of shearers' accommodation, under the Shearers' Accommodation Act, has continued to be carried out by the officers of this Division, and needed improvements to the accommodation provided for shearers are gradually being accomplished with little friction, and only in a few instances has it been necessary to take legal proceedings in order to enforce the requirements of the Inspector. It can quite honestly be said that, on the whole, the accommodation provided is now fairly good, and while some owners are under requisition to effect additions or alterations, and in some cases provide new premises, they show a desire to meet the reasonable demands of the Inspectors immediately.

Further particulars in regard to the work carried out under the Act are being supplied to the Labour Department, on whose behalf the work is being performed by this Department.

STAFF.

To the staff as a whole I wish to again record my appreciation for the loyal service which they have rendered during the year. The difficulties of the year have not been light, but these have been faced, and, if not wholly overcome, progress has been made.

The desire of the Division is that the service rendered the farmer should be of the utmost value to him in the tasks before him, particularly in the direction of assisting him to overcome his own peculiar difficulties. It is desired to strengthen and extend this work, and to endeavour to give increased service in the Animal Husbandry Branch of farming, in order that many weaknesses which are only too evident, and a hindrance to increased production, may be removed.

A rearrangement of some stock inspectorates through amalgamation has been made possible by the reduction in the rabbit pest; but if the position of the rabbit pest to-day is to be maintained, and noxious-weeds control is not to be weakened, there is a limit to which this curtailment of inspectorates is to be extended, as the districts are already large, and the necessary close supervision might easily be rendered impossible and the position of to-day, gained after many years of endeavour, be lost.

DAIRY DIVISION.

REPORT OF W. M. SINGLETON, DIRECTOR.

THE SEASON.

Although an exceptionally dry summer was experienced, approaching almost drought conditions in some districts, the year as a whole has been fairly favourable to the production of dairy-produce. A mild winter followed by good spring conditions in most districts enabled dairy cows to commence the new season in good condition.

Production of milk fell off considerably during the drier months, but, as good rains were experienced fairly generally in the early autumn, feed has since been in abundance. As a consequence of the dry summer, hay and root crops have not been so good as in the previous season, but, provided the coming winter conditions are favourable, dairy cows in many districts should commence their next lactation period in good heart.

PRODUCTION.

The production of butterfat during the year under review, it is pleasing to record, has never previously been exceeded over a similar period, and exceeds the previous peak year of 1924–25 by some 5,212 tons.

The more general use of fertilizers as a top-dressing agent, thus giving pastures an increased resistance to drought conditions, and an improvement in the producing-capacity of dairy herds, have been contributing factors towards this high record of production.