

ficting; given certain conditions it may be employed to advantage, but the evidence available does not show that it can be depended upon in all cases. Fencing, where the country is adapted to it, must afford a valuable check; and when erected upon private properties the rabbits can be destroyed without the danger of their being again suddenly overrun, as frequently occurs where no obstacle to their advance exists; and it is a question whether the expenditure incurred in continuous destruction would not become eventually far in excess of what the first outlay would be in protection against the plague. Were wire-net fencing included in the schedule to the Fencing Act, many would avail themselves of this protection which the fact of it not being a legal fence precludes.

With the view to retrenchment and to meet present requirements, a considerable number of agents and some Inspectors have been dispensed with; for this object an amendment to the present Act is proposed, which, by simplifying proceedings, will render it more workable with a much smaller staff, save time in dealing with delinquents, and leave more money available for other purposes, such as the purchase of natural enemy, &c.

The results of the past year's proceedings show that, although the pest is still slowly making fresh headway, yet their numbers on the previously-infested country are, as a rule, less, and the increase of sheep, good lambing and clip, speaks for itself; but yet, the fact remains that the pest is still, and must be, an annual tax upon the owners of properties as well as on the State, and that some inexpensive factor, in the shape of disease or natural enemy, is required as a destroyer to abate this continual drain on the principal industry of the colony.

A statement of expenditure, &c., is attached hereto.

I have, &c.,

BENJ. P. BAYLY, Superintending Inspector.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE, &c., for the YEAR ended 31st March, 1887.

District.	Number of Tenders accepted for destroying Rabbits on Crown Lands.	Amounting to	Quantity of Phosphorus used for Crown Lands.	Quantity sold.	Quantity on Hand on 31st March last.	Total Number of Skins exported from the Colony during Year ended 31st March, 1887.	Value.	Estimated Area of Crown Lands to be dealt with this Year.
		£	lb.	lb.	lb.		£	Acres.
Auckland ... ..	...	...	3	14	33	...	...	10,000
Napier ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Wellington ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	544,712	4,325	...
Wairarapa North ...	9	184	35	3	140	...	...	...
Wairarapa South ...	5	41	...	...	140	...	...	...
Nelson	3	28	30	31	55	...	...	...
Blenheim	1	12	...	235	63	...	...	...
Kaikoura ... ..	...	...	105	123	100	...	...	4,000
Lyttelton ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	3,689,982	24,544	...
Oamaru	1	46	...	10	20	17,170	163	17,000
Palmerston	3	114	...	86	...	...	...	...
Dunedin	2	108	4	10	7	4,376,228	35,375	26,000
Naseby	1	7	...	...	...	...	...	640
Clyde	5	794	20	70	130	...	...	75,260
Tuapeka	1	72	...	...	10	...	...	50,000
Balclutha ... ..	...	...	124	20	69	...	...	15,000
Queenstown	9	177	214	...	400	...	...	482,000
Invercargill	9	200	97	...	63	272,600	1,839	64,000
Southland	25	532	217	299	405	...	...	270,000
Totals	74	2,315	849	901	1,635	8,900,692	66,246	963,900

GENERAL REMARKS.—Payments to agents, labour, material purchased, and other contingencies not included in this expenditure. It is impossible to give the number of skins from each district; but the total export for the whole colony from the 1st April, 1886, to the 31st March, 1887, is shown herein, as exported from the different ports. The number of rabbit-skins exported during year ended 31st March, 1886, was 8,892,372, of the value of £81,847. The number of ferrets released on Crown lands by Government during last financial year was 1,922, and over 8,000 ferrets are known to have been released by private owners.