

CANTERBURY-KAIKOURA DISTRICT.

SIR,—

Sheep Inspector's Office, Christchurch, 26th April, 1890.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual rabbit report of the Canterbury-Kaikoura District for the year ended the 31st March, 1890, together with replies from myself and Sub-Inspectors to the queries referred to in circular.

The absence of floods or continual rains during the past year has been very favourable to the increase of rabbits. I have the satisfaction, however, of being able to report that in Canterbury there is no appreciable increase. The few rabbits that exist are chiefly confined to river-bed gorse and gorse fences, where, being of the semi-tame breed, they are not allowed to permanently increase.

In Kaikoura district I have to report a further decrease, owing, I think, mainly to the number of ferrets which have been liberated. There is a general wish in this district that ferret-breeding under Government supervision should be continued.

In East Amuri there is no material difference; silver-grey rabbits are scattered over the district, but they are in no place numerous.

In West Amuri, outside the rabbit-fence, the heavy fall of snow early in June put a stop to poisoning operations, and rabbits have increased in consequence, the natural enemies—stoats and weasels—not being in sufficient numbers to check their increase. Poisoning on a larger scale will be commenced earlier this season.

In South Canterbury, outside the rabbit-fence, rabbits still continue to increase; it is expected, however, that the reletting of the runs on fixed tenures will induce owners to take more vigorous measures than they have in the past. Much of this country is so inaccessible that rabbits can only be dealt with by natural enemies, such as stoats and weasels.

Rabbit-fences.—The South Canterbury fence continues to prove an effectual barrier to travelling rabbits; it is believed that none have passed the fence, and no repairs have been required. There have been 3,282 rabbits killed in the vicinity of the fence, all but a few odd ones of the semi-tame breed, on the outside of the fence. The Hurunui Board's fence is also effective, with the exception that some rabbits were allowed to get through the flood-gates at the Clarence end. These are being dealt with, and measures have been taken to prevent a recurrence of this. It may now be considered as beyond doubt that these fences, with strict supervision, will save Canterbury from the rabbit-pest.

I have, &c.,

R. FOSTER, Inspector.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands (Stock Department), Wellington.

From Sub-Inspector J. MOORE, Kaikoura.

(1.) The ferret, poison, shooting and ferreting with nets, and trapping. (2.) Encourage the breeding of ferrets, put down trapping. (3.) Very satisfactory. (4.), (5.) Nil. (6.) Native reserve, Mungamaunu, frontage South Bay, foreshore North Bay to Waipapa boundary; unavailable for grazing. (7.) 22½lb. (8.) 12½lb. (9.), (10.), (11.), (12.), (13.), (14.) Nil. (15.) Four hundred and fifty; most satisfactory results. (16.) Eight hundred; satisfactory result.

From Sub-Inspector S. R. QUARTLEY, Waiau.

(1.) Winter poisoning, dogging, shooting. (2.) That every encouragement be given to the erection of wire-netting fences. (3.) With the exception of the St. Helen's and Tarndale Runs, satisfactory work is being done, the feed everywhere being abundant. (4.), (5.), (6.), (7.), (8.), (9.), (10.), (11.), (12.), (13.) Nil. (14.) Four. (15.) Nil. (16.) About 600 have been turned out; results good. *General Remarks.*—Rabbits in this district are chiefly confined to the St. Helen's and Tarndale Runs, and most of this country is completely blocked with snow in the winter; it has therefore been deemed expedient to try early winter-poisoning, which it is hoped will give satisfactory results. Wire-netting fences to divide the large blocks are greatly needed to make rabbit work here a success.

From Sub-Inspector H. S. THOMSON, Pukaki Ferry.

(1.) The use of phosphorized grain in winter, dogging, digging out, and shooting during summer. (2.) The importation of more stoats and weasels, timed to arrive in New Zealand not earlier than October nor later than January. (3.) No perceptible increase on Canterbury side of rabbit-fence, but more rabbits appearing along the fence on Otago side. Rabbits still spreading over a larger area between Ohau and Pukaki Lakes, though not more numerous on ground previously frequented. (4.) Nil. (5.) See "Remarks." (6.) Tasman Park Reserve, islands in Tekapo and Pukaki Rivers, and, if not re-leased, Run No. 88, 65,000 acres, and Run No. 93, 200,000 acres. (7.) 70lb. (8.) Nil. (9.) 140lb. (10.), (11.), (12.), (13.), (14.) Nil. (15.), (16.) None. *General Remarks.*—Though not properly coming under the heading "Tenders accepted," there was expended in the destruction of rabbits on unoccupied Crown lands, by day-labour—At head of Lake Ohau, £176; west side of Tasman River, £28; on islands in Tekapo River, £40; on islands in Pukaki River, £3: total, £247.

OTAGO DISTRICT.

SIR,—

Sheep Inspector's Office, Dunedin, 8th May, 1890.

I have the honour to forward herewith the annual rabbit report of the Otago District for the year ended the 31st March, 1890, together with replies from myself and Sub-Inspectors to the queries referred to in circular.

Mild growing weather continued up to the first week in June of last winter, when hard frosts set in, and continued almost without a break up to middle of August. So severe were the frosts, with