

Cattle.—General health good, some very heavy weights coming from the Catlins district. There have been three cases of actinomycosis and two of tuberculosis; all the animals have been destroyed.

Horses.—Health good, and no appearance of the bot-fly.

Rabbits.—The means adopted for destroying—phosphorized grain during the winter months and also on bad patches during the summer, besides trapping, ferreting, and digging-out; also a little poisoning with jam. Some landowners have dug out the under-runners following up the gullies, which has done a great deal of good. Owing to the spread of gorse on private properties, it is very difficult to cope with the pest in some districts, and unless owners are compelled by Act to destroy the same very little headway can be made. This has been a very favourable year for the increase of rabbits, but not having been in the district last season, I cannot say whether there is a decrease in numbers or not. A rabbit-factory was working at Clinton last season, but has not started yet, and I do not believe it intends doing so, which, in my opinion, is a good thing, as it only tends to farm the rabbits during the summer months.

The high country is very clear, but wherever there is any bush, and in places along the fore-shore, such as False Island and the mouth of the Tokomairiro River, I find them very hard to keep down.

Weasels are increasing very much, particularly in the Catlins and Owake districts, and are doing good.

Crops.—The Hessian fly has, I believe, been in the district for some time, but was not recognised till this season, the damage having been attributed to other causes. This year it is found on most farms in the Bruce and Clutha Counties. In the Tokomairiro district it has caused considerable loss. The grub leather-jacket, specimens of which were forwarded to you in February last for identification, has attacked oats in the Warepa district, and occasioned some trouble. I have circulated the information *re* preventive measures sent from the head office. There are no other crop pests.

HERBERT HULL.

Balclutha.

Southland Division.

Sheep.—The general condition of the flocks has been exceptionally good, last winter being very open, and the growth in feed received very little check. A slight mortality amongst a few flocks in the Fortrose district happened during the winter, but nothing serious. During shearing season farmers lost a few sheep. On making minute inquiries I could not find a single case where a sheep had just died; but from what I heard, and the descriptions I got of the sheep, I am led to believe that the deaths resulted from shear cuts.

I would also draw your attention to the enormous growth of the frozen mutton trade in this part of the Island. The export of frozen mutton from the Bluff for the period ended the 31st March was 189,595 carcasses, and, notwithstanding that large number being killed, the total increase in sheep this year will be very large.

Lambing.—Good, and in many instances large percentages were dropped. Average lambing in merino ewes was about 55 per cent., and cross-breds about 80 per cent.

Lung-worm and Foot-rot.—There was nothing to complain of.

Lice I have found very prevalent, but settlers are beginning to realise the fact that it pays to dip their sheep regularly, and keep them healthy; so I trust that before long that I will not hear so much cause of complaint.

The increase in sheep has been very great, notwithstanding the large number that has been frozen during the past season. I attribute this principally to so much country being opened up, and more settlers going in for sheep, on account of the high prices ruling.

Cattle.—With the exception of two cases of cancer, which came under my notice, and which in each instance the beast was destroyed, the general health has been good.

Horses.—There was a slight mortality amongst horses in the Winton district, which was reported to you; so far, no cause has been discovered, one settler has lost twenty-seven horses in four years.

Rabbits were being got well in hand up till last winter, and I was in hopes that they would be kept so; but on account of the exceptionally fine winter and spring, very little rain having fallen, few rabbits were drowned in the nests; and notwithstanding the extra steps that the landholders have taken, the rabbits have increased very much. But I trust by having a good poisoning season this coming winter, and by insisting on every one following up during the spring months, the rabbits will be got well in hand again.

I have formed several depôts for the sale of phosphorized grain in different parts of my district; there settlers can obtain properly mixed grain at cost price, and this the settlers admit has been a great assistance to them. I only wish that it was in my power to insist that the only grain laid by settlers was procured from the Government depôts, as I am quite convinced that the cause of a non-successful poisoning is mainly due to the careless way the grain is mixed.

In many parts of my district I have been very successful with summer poisoning. I have given strychnine and jam poisoning a slight trial, and have found the results most deadly; but I am afraid that I could not recommend its use for general poisoning, as it is very dangerous to lay about a place.

Crops.—The crops have been very fair, but owing to the prevalence of dry weather last summer have not come up to the expectations of the growers. No damage that I am aware of has been caused by the Hessian fly.

Invercargill.

H. T. TURNER.