

*Cattle.*—The general health is good; the loss of young stock much less than last year. A considerable number of cattle have been destroyed, suffering from tuberculosis, actinomycosis, and cancer, the owners (except in a very few cases) offering no objection, as it is the general wish to have these diseases stamped out as speedily as possible. In this connection the auctioneers have given every assistance, and cases of this kind are now becoming more rare. Several instances have been reported from the Hawera district of cows dying immediately after calving, but from what cause it is difficult to say. "Wasters" are not so numerous as formerly, greater care being given to feeding the calves owing to their rise in value.

*Crops.*—The crops generally have been very good throughout the district, but considerable loss was sustained owing to the difficulty of harvesting, on account of the unusual wetness of the season. The Hessian fly in the Marton and surrounding neighbourhood has, as far as I can learn, caused a loss of about three to four bushels per acre. The Bathurst burr is a new pest in this district, which has made its appearance at Parewanui, near Bulls, there being a patch there some four or five acres in extent, and if not taken in hand soon will shortly become a serious trouble. The Californian thistle, I am also informed, is in the district, but I have not seen it myself. The settlers generally express their satisfaction at receiving the "Farmers' Leaflets," issued by the department.

*Rabbits.*—Rabbits in this district have very materially decreased; 10,781 skins have been paid for by the Manawatu Rabbit Extermination Society during the year, making a total number of rabbits destroyed since the re-formation of the society in December, 1891, of 12,500. It was found that the price formerly paid—viz., 4d. per skin, was not sufficient to produce good work, consequently the bonus was raised to 6d., with very satisfactory results. The society shortly intend further raising the bonus to 1s. per skin, and this, I have every hope, will result in practically stamping out the pest in that portion of the district under the guidance of the Extermination Society, and which contains over two-thirds of the rabbit-infested part of the country.

The settlers are now fairly alive to the danger of allowing the pest to get possession, and those who formerly believed that no danger existed are now satisfied that continued exertions are necessary to prevent the possibility of such calamity. Weasels and stoats have been seen as far north as Hawera, and in the Manawatu are becoming quite numerous. A rabbitier at Foxton reported that on his setting fire to a flax-bush no less than seven weasels ran out; and the same man says he saw a weasel hanging on to the neck of a rabbit, so that it is evident they must be doing some good work.

RICHARD HULL, Inspector.

Wanganui.

#### NORTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT.

*Sheep.*—Owing to the continuous rainfall last winter, assisted by internal parasites, there has been a good deal of mortality. Owners are becoming alive to the fact that means must be adopted to prevent the loss of hoggets every year, and the various remedies are now more generally administered. The work, however, is not always done at an early enough stage of the disease. Settlers in bush districts also purchased old sheep, unfit for new country, and in many instances their loss was considerable.

*Lambing.*—Fairly good, but not equal to that of last year. Average, from 70 to 75 per cent.

*Wool.*—Generally speaking, the clip has been light, with a large percentage of unsound and cotted fleeces, attributable to the wet season, and in a great many cases to the evil of over-stocking.

*Lice.*—Lice exist more or less throughout the district, though I have not noticed any serious cases. Most of the flocks in the district have now been dipped.

*Foot-rot,* which was troublesome in one or two instances, is now much reduced.

*Horses.*—The only feature in connection with horses is the presence of the bot, one or two instances having come under my notice in the immediate vicinity of Masterton, otherwise horses throughout the district are in good order.

*Cattle.*—Cattle are healthy, no report of any disease having reached me. Owing to the small demand for this class of stock during the last few years, various owners have reduced their numbers; prices, however, are now very favourable, and probably more attention will be paid to rearing cattle.

*Crops.*—The Hessian fly was more or less through the wheat crop in the Masterton district this season, one or two small fields badly infected, the majority only slightly.

*Rabbits.*—I am of opinion that, generally speaking, the steps taken by landowners in the district to cope with the pest, together with the natural enemies introduced by the late North Wairarapa Rabbit Board, have resulted in a diminution of the number of rabbits. There are, however, several instances in which rabbits are numerous. Neglect to take efficient steps to destroy are apparent, and the department has, in consequence, been obliged to put the law in motion with the object of enforcing the provisions of the Act. Good work has been done in many cases, the result of which must be to encourage the continuance of remedial efforts. The usual methods have been adopted—viz., poisoning in the winter with phosphorized grain, followed up with shooting, trapping, hunting with dogs, ferreting, filling in burrows and watercourses, fumigating with bi-sulphate of carbon, &c.

Since the North Wairarapa Rabbit Board was abolished, the late Trustees decided to expend the balance of rates collected in introducing more natural enemies. Accordingly, about a thousand ferrets were obtained and distributed throughout the district. A few of the settlers have also commenced breeding ferrets again. My experience with natural enemies is that, to keep up their numbers, a fresh supply must be turned out yearly, and as early in the spring as possible, as they will not increase in this district otherwise, but, on the contrary, die out. As regards stoats and weasels, numbers of them have taken to the bush districts, and travelled through to Woodville and Palmerston, where they are frequently seen.

*Wire-netting.*—Several miles of boundary fences are netted, and the benefit of doing this is a very noticeable feature. I am of opinion that the use of netting is of great assistance in coping