

As far as I have been able to ascertain, practically all of the game imported and liberated is doing well, and it is only a matter of a few years when much of the country which may now be regarded as absolutely waste land will provide great attractions for oversea visitors, and also a healthy means of amusement and recreation for residents in the Dominion.

Probably the best deer-stalking is now secured in the Otago District. Many good heads were last season secured in the vicinity of Lakes Hawea and Wanaka. Good sport was also found by stalkers in the Nelson district, and special arrangements were made with the local Acclimatisation Society for guides in this district. The Wairarapa, which some years ago provided the best stalking in New Zealand, is now practically closed except to those who are fortunate enough to secure the good offices of the runholder, there being little Crown lands in this district available for the stalker.

ROTORUA ACCLIMATISATION DISTRICT.

In addition to the area under the control of the Department at the beginning of the year, about 7,500 square miles, extending 160 miles from Table Cape on the east to the Wanganui River on the west, and 110 miles from Ruapehu on the south to the Bay of Plenty on the north, the Whakatane County was added to the district during the year, increasing the area by an additional 1,200 square miles.

The work carried out during the year has consisted mainly in the hatching and distributing of trout, and ranging the district, to prevent the illegal destruction of game.

The hatchery on the Waikuta Stream has again proved very successful under Mr. E. F. Rutherford's charge, and the following quantities of eyed ova and fry have been distributed: Eyed ova, 450,000; trout-fry, 1,160,000.

A careful watch was kept during the season on the conditions of diseases of the fish in the lakes, and there is an improvement noticeable. The fish were, as is usual, not in a very good condition in the beginning of the season, but from January onwards a large number of catches of trout of excellent quality were taken from the lakes.

Although there has been an improvement noticeable, it seems to me to be quite apparent that Lake Rotorua is overstocked with fish, and I am of opinion that the poor condition of many of the fish is attributable to this cause. Active steps have been taken to weed out the unhealthy fish, and to permit only those that are in first-class condition to enter the main streams of lakes for spawning purposes. I feel sure that if this work is carried out carefully the result will be a noticeable improvement in the condition of the fish. Many of the statements regarding the number of poor-conditioned fish in the lake have been very greatly exaggerated.

In order to supply additional trout-food, six cans, containing approximately 250,000 fresh-water shrimps, were brought up from the Waikato River at Mercer, and liberated among the weed in the shallow portions of the south-east and south-west shores of the lake. It is anticipated that these will breed prolifically, and will replace, to a large extent, the diminishing koura.

No further liberations of deer have taken place during the year, but several reports have been received of those presented by Mr. Chirnside and liberated on the northern shores of Lake Rotoiti last year, and apparently the herd is increasing.

Pheasant-shooting has proved satisfactory this season. The bags were not large, but good sport is available for those who are prepared to cover a fair amount of country. Quail are abundant, and give good sport for the gun.

The payment of 1s. per head for shags has resulted in the destruction of 1,193 shags during the year. In addition to this, the frequent shooting has driven the birds back to the sea-coast, which is perhaps more important than the actual number destroyed.

Active and valuable assistance and co-operation has been received during the year from the Rotorua Rod and Gun Club.

TOWN OF ROTORUA.

A remarkable feature of the year's work is the fact that the debit balance of £456 at the beginning of the year, resulting from the overdraft taken over from the Town Council, has been converted into a credit balance of £49. This is not merely a paper credit, as the liabilities were paid off as far as possible before the close of the year, the outstanding accounts only amounting to £92, as compared with £205 at the beginning of the year; and, moreover, this credit balance has already increased since the close of the year. This result has only been obtained by very careful administration of the funds available, the closest possible economy, and energetic collection of the accounts.

The total revenue for the year amounted to £4,756, which is £428 above the average (£4,328) for the past five years. The two main sources of this revenue are the rents from Crown leases (which are practically fixed for ninety-nine years at about £2,000 per annum) and the half-share of bath fees (which show an increase of about £200 for the year—viz., £1,492, as compared with £1,294 for the previous year). Receipts from other services amounted to £590, as compared with £580 for the previous five years. Under this heading a further energetic collection of outstanding accounts has reduced the amount owing from £365 at the beginning of the year to £235 at its close. Pound fees have increased from £50 to £78. Dog-registration fees have fallen from £34 to £22, on account of the reduction of the license fee for the year from 10s. to 5s. License fees have increased from £369 to £391.

Apart from the slight increase in the bath fees, the general revenue is thus practically stationary, owing to the fact that the main source of revenue—namely, the rents from Crown leases in the town—are fixed for ninety-nine years.