

increase is very small—namely, only 0.36 per cent.—it yet indicates the necessity for using all possible precautions to control the spread of this disease. The figures show that from 290,150 cattle examined 8.04 per cent. were found to be affected with tuberculosis in some degree, a large number of them being only slightly affected. In the case of pigs the percentage affected in any degree was 11.7. In view of the enhanced value of both cattle and pigs it is necessary that every assistance should be given to farmers in taking measures to prevent this disease becoming troublesome among their stock, and in this connection it is very satisfactory to note that a very large proportion of the time of Inspectors of Stock, especially in dairying districts, is occupied in visiting farms for the purpose of examining animals reported on by their owners as being suspected of being affected with tuberculosis. Though hampered by shortness of staff, it is hoped that during the coming year generous assistance may be given to farmers in this direction.

Actinomycosis.—An unusually large number of cases have been reported during the year, particularly in the South Island. When discovered in a sufficiently early stage medicinal treatment has been adopted with successful results.

Ticks on Farm-animals.—Considerable concern was manifested by settlers and others in the district north of Auckland on account of the unusually large number of ticks found on cattle, horses, dogs, &c., in the district. These ticks are of two varieties viz., *Hæmaphysalis punctata* and *Ixodes ricinus*, the first-named being most frequently met with. These ticks are distinct from the tick which acts as a carrier of disease among cattle in Queensland, that tick being known by the name *Boophilus bovis*. Apart from such effects as they might cause in the direction of injuring hides of cattle harbouring them, and withdrawing blood from the body, no harmful results have been discovered as a result of the presence of these parasites, and they are in themselves quite incapable of causing disease. Even in Queensland, and in other countries where the cattle-disease known as tick fever is present, ticks do not themselves cause the disease, but simply act as carriers of infection from animal to animal. This disease has never been present in New Zealand, and, as the importation of cattle from Australia, the United States, and South Africa is absolutely prohibited, there is every reason to believe that so long as the existing quarantine regulations continue it will not gain entrance here.

LIVE-STOCK.

Cattle.—An enumeration of the cattle in the Dominion taken in January, 1917, showed an increase of 157,739 head as compared with that of the previous year.

Sheep.—Sheep returns taken as at the 30th April, 1917, showed an increase of 686,329 sheep in the North Island, and a decrease of 204,093 in the South Island, there being thus a net increase for the whole Dominion of 482,236. The decrease in the South Island is principally due to the dry seasons experienced in 1915-16 and 1916-17. The present season has been of a different character, and feed is plentiful, consequently the shortage of sheep in the South Island has been felt. Several shipments of ewes were sent from the North Island to Lyttelton.

Pigs.—The number of pigs in the Dominion is decreasing, and during the present season the effects of this have been felt not only through short supplies available for bacon-factories, but also through the resulting high values which have ruled. On the 22nd October, 1917, the export of pork from the Dominion was prohibited. The decrease in numbers as compared with the previous year was 13,731, and the previous year had shown a decrease over the year before. It is hoped that the keen demand and high value ruling for pigs during the year will have the effect of considerably increasing pig-production next season.

SLAUGHTER OF STOCK FOR EXPORT.

The arrangement made under which all export meat is purchased by the Imperial Government has been of the utmost value to stockowners, the fixed values having kept the market steady, while at the same time the fact of all export meat being purchased has ensured the sale, at sufficiently remunerative prices, of all fat stock available for slaughter for export. For the portion of the present season up to the 31st March the South Island showed a decrease in the number of stock slaughtered in meat-export slaughterhouses, as compared with the same period of the previous season, of 19,027 cattle, 205,911 sheep, and 497,051 lambs. This, however, must not be looked upon as being due to decreased production, or to an intention to carry stock over instead of slaughtering it, but is really the result of the seasonal conditions, stock not fattening so quickly or readily as usual in some districts. It is expected that the South Island season will probably be longer than usual, and that in the end the quantity slaughtered will not be much less than last year, unless perhaps in the case of lambs, a larger number than usual of which may be carried over in order to assist in overcoming the existing shortage. The North Island shows an increase of cattle and sheep slaughtered over the same period of the previous year, this increase being—cattle 3,038, and sheep 314,071. Lambs show a decrease of 105,096.

MEAT-EXPORT SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

One new meat-export slaughterhouse was opened during the year at Whakatane. Another, at Kakariki, near Marton, was practically completed. In order to be prepared against possible shortage of shipping during the season, cold-storage accommodation at meat-export slaughterhouses has been largely increased during the year. The question of providing additional cold storage was placed before the freezing companies by the Right Hon. the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture in August, 1917, and the action by the companies in taking steps to provide this is most satisfactory, and is highly appreciated. Arrangements were made by the Government to provide a certain amount of financial assistance where desired, but several companies relied solely on their own resources to