

COMPENSATION PAID FOR STOCK AND MEAT CONDEMNED.

Compensation to the amount of £15,091 was paid out during the year for 5,872 animals condemned in the field for disease under the Stock Act, and £13,391 for carcasses or parts of carcasses condemned for disease on examination at time of slaughter at abattoirs and meat-export slaughterhouses, &c., under the provisions of the Slaughtering and Inspection Act.

IMPORTATION OF STUD STOCK FROM ABROAD.

Owing to the continuance of outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in Great Britain, the prohibition on cattle, sheep, and swine from there was continued, but considerable numbers of sheep and swine were imported from those Australian States from which the importation of stock is not absolutely prohibited. All these importations were allowed only on the precedent consent of the Hon. Minister having been obtained, and subject to compliance with such conditions as were from time to time thought necessary in order that the introduction of disease might be guarded against.

DESTRUCTION OF THE KEA.

The subsidy of 5s. per beak which has been paid for the destruction of the kea for some years past was continued during the year, and a total of 2,916 beaks were paid for, a decrease of 1,107 on the previous year.

INSPECTION OF DAIRY PREMISES SUPPLYING MILK FOR DIRECT CONSUMPTION.

The inspection of all premises licensed by the Department, under the provisions of the Dairy Industry Act and regulations, to retail milk for human consumption has been carried out with energy during the year, and improvements necessary have been effected on the instructions of the Inspectors. Generally speaking, the premises and herds are in a satisfactory condition. Particularly does this apply to the dairies supplying the large centres of population, where the farms are concentrated within a more or less defined radius and subjected to regular and thorough inspection under expert guidance and supervision.

The tuberculin testing of individual herds and selected members of the respective herds has been greatly extended during the year, and it is expected that this will continue to expand.

During the year new patent sediment testers were supplied to all Inspectors carrying out inspection of dairies in the chief centres, and these have been found of considerable value to them in their work.

IMPORTATION OF ANIMAL-MANURES.

The work of supervising the sterilization of all animal-manures for New Zealand prepared in Australia and India in premises specially licensed for that purpose under the requirements of the New Zealand regulations, for the purpose of preventing the introduction of anthrax by means of bone-dust, &c., has been efficiently carried out during the year. Owing to various causes the quantity shipped to New Zealand was less than usual, but indications point to a considerable increase during the coming season.

POULTRY INDUSTRY.

The poultry industry has continued to make steady, if slow, progress, but it continues to be very considerably affected by the high price and scarcity of foodstuffs, particularly wheat, pollard, and bran. Pollard is not only difficult to obtain in sufficient quantity, but has of late years often proved to be of very inferior quality, consequently not possessing the feeding-value required for heavy egg-production. Given sufficient food material at reasonable prices the poultry industry is capable of adding considerably to the Dominion's exports. As with all our other exports, however, it is necessary that the highest standard be maintained, otherwise the price obtained abroad will be an unpayable one and the industry will suffer. The export eggs have been well received and realized good prices when landed at the proper time, but nevertheless sufficient indication was given that the same reception would not be given a lower standard egg, and it is advisable that only first-grade eggs be exported. A tendency to get the standard lowered has been exhibited, but it is a mistake.

Following are extracts from the report of the Chief Poultry Instructor, who, with the other Instructors, are deserving of commendation for the work they have performed during the year:—

The poultry industry continues to make sound progress, and now that an export trade in eggs has been established on the London market greater and more rapid progress may safely be anticipated. The export trade in eggs has given the industry a decided fillip and placed it on a firmer footing than ever before.

It is gratifying to be able to report that there was a general improvement in the quality of eggs received at the export grading-stores as compared to the previous year.

During the year 6,670 cases of 30 dozen each were shipped to the United Kingdom, an increase of 85 per cent. over the previous year. The outstanding quality of New Zealand's first-grade eggs has again been demonstrated by the fact that some of the lines shipped during the earliest part of the season commanded a higher price than eggs of all other competitive countries, a price exceeding even that of fresh eggs produced on English soil. Excellent prices were secured for all large-sized eggs which reached the Home market not later than the end of December, but unfortunately eggs of a second-grade size did not fare so well generally. With some of these lines there was a difference of 16s. per case of 30 dozen. There was a considerable reduction in price for all grades of eggs that reached the Home market after the Christmas season. The foregoing is sufficient to indicate that the best possible returns which the export trade offers can be secured only with eggs weighing not less than 2 oz. which are shipped to reach the Home market before or during the Christmas season. The question of making larger shipments of nothing else but a high-grade product, and at the right season, is a matter calling for the earnest consideration of those concerned in the export trade.