

Failure of Field Administration.

IN every community there are from five to ten per cent. of "incorrigibles," who are outside the pale of sport or even decency. Moral appeal is lost on these "unimpressonables." A penalty severe enough to be a deterrent is the only remedy. Ranging is a costly work requiring energy, skill, cunning and other important qualifications. The chances are all on the side of the poacher; therefore the penalty should be severe. It all too frequently happens, however, that the fine is equivalent in shillings to the pounds that it has cost to bring the culprit to meet his dues.

Acclimatisation Societies receive a very large sum for administering the Animals Protection and Game Act 1921-22 in the field, and the brunt of ranging falls upon these bodies. For the whole of New Zealand they furnish some dozen or so paid rangers, who have other duties, such as care of fry and game-distribution. Upon these few wardens rests almost the whole responsibility, and it is, of course, absurd to expect that the work of ranging can be anything more than touched upon.

There are hundreds of honorary rangers, but they cannot be expected to give a large measure of time and money on what is only too often a thankless job. Only some five per cent. of these can be said to do helpful work.

Every member of the highly efficient police force is nominally a ranger, but this force is more than fully occupied round towns and cities. Thus it happens that the proportion of prosecutions to offences (particularly pigeon-shooting) is remarkably small. Acclimatisation Societies are chiefly interested in trout fishing, game birds and opossums from which they derive their revenue. Some of their members are concerned for the welfare of native birds, but it would not be wise to look to these Societies as a whole for effective administration in the wide field of wild life.

What supervision is exercised over persons, for instance, who are granted permits to collect specimens of native birds? Copies of permits are sent to Acclimatisation Societies in the districts concerned, but does one ever hear of an inspection of a collector's bag? The Forest and Bird Protection Society has long held the opinion that the issue of permits has been on a haphazard basis, in that permits are sometimes abused, and has urged that every collector should be accompanied by a representative of the State at the collector's expense.

Similarly, there is need of a keener watch and ward of native forests. Why are opossum-hunters and trampers allowed to mar and kill trees? The annual report of the State Forest Service has a brief mention of "honorary rangers," but gives no details of their work. Did they prevent any vandalism? Did their zeal bring any culprits to court? The