

1883.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE RABBIT NUISANCE

(ANNUAL REPORT ON), BY THE SUPERINTENDING INSPECTOR.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

Mr. B. P. BAYLY to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Wellington, 31st July, 1883.

I have the honour to furnish my annual report on the steps taken for the extermination of rabbits, and the results obtained, during the period 1st July, 1882, to 30th June, 1883.

In September, 1882, the amended Rabbit Act came into operation. On the whole, this measure may be said to have been fairly successful. The reports from the different Inspectors, which are attached hereto, show that a more than perceptible diminution of the pest has been effected. As these reports give every detail, I shall confine myself to general remarks upon the whole question.

Although the present Act works fairly well, and good results have been obtained, yet, as contemplated, the great difficulty has been, and will still be found to exist, in dealing with the large areas of waste lands, together with the different reserves set aside for various purposes throughout the colony. Many of these might be temporarily disposed of for grazing purposes, on condition that the rabbits were destroyed during the time of tenure; and I am of opinion that, where possible, these areas should be alienated from the ownership of the Crown for the time being, as a few years' cost of rabbit destruction upon these blocks will amount to more than their value, and, under existing circumstances, this may be looked upon as an annual tax.

Where such inaccessible areas exist, as in portions of Otago, I see but one solution, and that is the introduction of the natural enemy. Rabbits are now well established throughout the western ranges, where to deal with them by ordinary means is simply impossible, and these act as a dépôt for restocking adjacent country.

Inquiries tend to show that the stoat and weasel, if they can possibly be imported, would be the best agents of destruction to turn out on these wastes. A good bonus has been offered to any one who will introduce a certain number of these animals in a healthy condition, and I am informed that one man has proceeded to England for the purpose of making an attempt.

The importation of ferrets (statement attached) has not been attended with the success that was anticipated, disease during the voyage having carried off, in many instances, the whole of a shipment. This makes the cost of those delivered reach a high average; and it becomes a question whether it would not be more economical to offer a certain sum, say 12s. per head, for all that could be bred in the colony; and, as a number of private individuals own ferrets simply for the purpose of selling the increase, others would, having a certain sum insured for what they could breed, take up the industry, and thus an inducement would be offered for breeding them, which does not exist at present.

It seems to be the general impression that the ferret is doing good work, and experience shows that they must be turned out in as large numbers as possible to be serviceable. When liberated only a few at a time, their numbers are not sufficient to cope with the increase of the rabbit; consequently the ground has to be hunted over, trapped, or other means of destruction adopted; while this is being carried out numbers of the ferrets and natural enemies must be destroyed; yet, with every exertion, some considerable time must elapse before their destroying power will be sufficiently increased to counterbalance the fecundity of the rabbit; and experience shows that considerable loss is sustained from disease and other causes after they have been turned out. To be thoroughly serviceable a hardier animal is required, especially for the colder portions of Otago.

With a view to distribute ferrets on Crown lands throughout the colony, breeding establishments have been formed at Waimata and Masterton, North Island, and at Christchurch, in the South Island; together with this a certain number have been distributed to private individuals whose properties are bordered by Crown lands or reserves. This has been done with a view to turn out the increase on such waste lands when sufficiently numerous, and it is proposed to continue and gradually extend this system. Those receiving them are held responsible for the number supplied, and are required to return either the original number or their value. In no case as yet have any been turned out on Crown lands by the department, the increase not being sufficiently numerous to allow it; but, at the same time, on private properties, notably in Marlborough, as many as five hundred have been bred by private owners and turned out on one station during the season.

As the ordinary means of destruction phosphorized grain is still acknowledged to be the cheapest and most efficacious method of dealing with the pest, especially on large areas. An endeavour has been made this season, where practicable, to introduce a block system to deal with the country in a face, as well as for the purpose of inducing combined action on the part of adjoining

owners. The results from this course are reported as being very satisfactory. Arsenic with carrots has been tried during the summer months in some localities with success.

Several patents have been taken out for fumigators as a means of destruction. Some of these are undoubtedly serviceable on river-beds and where burrows are numerous, especially after ground has been poisoned; as by these extra means rabbits that are shy of poison are destroyed, more particularly in summer, when they do not take the bait as freely as in the winter months; and I am of opinion that good work can be done with poison all the year round by changing the process.

Although great improvements have been effected in the preparation of poisoned grain, yet no means of destruction have been devised or adopted that deals comprehensively with the pest, or as yet leaves any other outlook but that, unless other than present known means are obtainable, the annual destruction of rabbits must be a continuous tax on the country. That they can be kept within bounds by present methods is admitted, but the case demands something more than this, if such can be procured; nor would a very large bonus be misplaced did it succeed in evolving some scheme that would meet the evil.

It has been suggested that disease should be introduced; but hitherto the risk to be run to stock and human beings in pursuing this course has been considered too great to attempt it. But at the same time if a large reward, say, of several thousand pounds, was offered to any one who invented or discovered some safe, yet comprehensive, means of destruction, precluding the present waste of capital for this purpose, the terms and conditions under which such bonus would be paid to be advertised in the leading papers throughout Great Britain and on the Continent, possibly scientists with this inducement might take the matter up; and if even a thoroughly successful solution of the difficulty was not obtained, yet a vast amount of useful information would be the result. This would compensate for the cost of advertising and inquiry.

In conclusion, I may say that, although the pest has decreased in numbers during the year, yet the area infested is gradually but slowly increasing. In the North Island rabbits have been seen, in odd ones, near the Napier boundary, and steps have already been taken to meet this danger; and it is hoped that by checking it at once the numbers will never be sufficient to cause any serious damage. In the South Island they have appeared in the Waimate and Geraldine Counties, and an agent has been appointed there to inquire into the state of the district, &c., and to take the necessary steps to prevent their increase. Reports to hand show that this step was not taken any too soon, as they are known to exist in several localities; but confidence is expressed that, as the numbers are yet comparatively few, the pest will not be permitted to increase sufficiently to cause such damage as has occurred elsewhere through neglecting them on their first appearance; and I am glad to say that owners in these localities, as a rule, fully realize the threatened danger. On the whole I think I may fairly challenge contradiction in asserting that since the Act of 1882 came into force great destruction has been effected, the results of which, I trust, will be patent during the incoming year.

Appended returns show the expenditure incurred by Government in dealing with the waste lands and other contingencies.

I have, &c.,

BENJ. P. BAYLY,
Superintending Inspector.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

District.	Number of Tenders Accepted.	Amounting to	Total Area Tended for in Acres.	Quantity of Phosphorus used in District (at 4s. per lb.)	Its Cost.	Quantity used for Crown Lands.	Quantity Sold.	Quantity on Hand on the 31st March last.	Total Number of Skins Exported from Colony.	Estimated Area of Crown Lands to be dealt with this Year.
		£		lb.		lb.	lb.			Acres.
Auckland...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,000
Napier ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Masterton - Wel- lington	18	494	33,320	168	...	101	67	32	1,500,456	...
Nelson ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Blenheim...	1	80	10,000	166	...	80	86	34	...	12,000
Kaikoura...	2	43	3,000	86	...	...	86	90	...	4,000
Timaru ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lyttelton...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,034,204	...
Oamaru ...	2	180	7,600	...	...	...	...	...	...	7,600
Dunedin ...	13	1,134	70,000	580	...	...	580	...	...	72,000
Naseby ...	1	6	700	10	...	...	10	...	4,873,891	45,000
Clyde ...	14	787	24,000	166	...	...	166	524	...	64,000
Tuapeka ...	6	153	23,000	867	...	17	850	...	...	48,000
Queenstown ...	19	412	93,000	400	...	50	350	...	...	230,000
Invercargill ...	21	£300	150,000	100	...	...	100	...	514,205	160,000
Southland ...	18	258	30,000	300	...	...	300	10	...	350,000
Totals ...	115	4,847	444,620	2,843	568 12 0	248	2,595	690	8,922,756	993,600

GENERAL REMARKS.—Payments to agents, labour, material purchased, and other contingencies not included in this expenditure. It is impossible to give the number of skins from each district; but the total export for the whole colony from the 1st April, 1882, to the 31st March, 1883, is shown herein, as exported from the different ports.

APPENDIX.

A copy of the following circular No. 10 has been forwarded to each of the following Rabbit Inspectors: Lewis, Auckland; Pasley, Napier; Sutton, Masterton; Orbell, Nelson; Blundell, Blenheim; Passau, Kaikoura; Macdonald, Timaru; Fullarton, Oamaru; Johnson, Dunedin; Miles, Naseby; Rees, Clyde; Bouchier, Queenstown; Douglass, Invercargill; Macdonald, Gore; and Hickson, Tapanui. In answer to which the following replies have been received:—

(Circular No. 10.)

SIR,— Colonial Secretary's Office (Stock Branch), Wellington, 28th April, 1883.

I have to request that you will be good enough to furnish answers to the following questions without delay. The last financial year is the period to which these questions relate, *i.e.*, 1st April, 1882, to 31st March, 1883.

I have, &c.,

BENJ. P. BAYLY,
Superintending Inspector.

Rabbit Inspector,

- (1.) What means have been adopted for destroying rabbits?
- (2.) Have you any further recommendations to make?
- (3.) What progress has there been made?
- (4.) How many tenders have been accepted?
- (5.) What did the whole of them amount to?
- (6.) State approximately the total area tendered for?
- (7.) State the area required to be dealt with by Government this year?
- (8.) What quantity of phosphorus has there been purchased for use in your district?
- (9.) What was its cost?
- (10.) What quantity was used for Government purposes?
- (11.) What quantity was sold to private individuals?
- (12.) What was the quantity on hand on the 31st March last?
- (13.) Number of skins exported?
- (14.) Number of prosecutions?
- (15.) Number of convictions?
- (16.) Number of dismissals?
- (17.) State the names of owners of properties dealt with under section 11?

General Remarks:

From Rabbit Inspector LEWIS, Auckland.

(1.) Guns and dogs. (2.) Materials and utensils should be supplied by the Government, and instructions given to Inspectors to poison, in the winter season, all rabbits found upon Government lands; provided always that Natives and other owners of swine upon those lands should have the option of either destroying the rabbits, or protecting their swine from the evil effects of poison laid by the Inspectors. (3.) A few hundreds have been destroyed at Raglan, Whangaroa, Mongonui, and Alexandra. (4.), (5.), (6.) None. (7.) Say 1,000 acres, comprising bays along the sea-coast, and other small patches of land where rabbits may hereafter be found. (8.), (9.), (10.), (11.), (12.), (13.), (14.), (15.), (16.), (17.) None. *General Remarks.*—The surface soil of large areas of the Auckland District being of a tenacious character is not suitable for rabbit-burrowing, and the settlers generally do not appear to appreciate Government action for the destruction of rabbits upon private properties, the animals not being sufficiently numerous to be considered a nuisance.

From Rabbit Inspector PASLEY, Napier.

(1.) Hunting with dogs and shooting. (2.) None. (3.) Owners in this district are nearly all fully alive to the danger of allowing rabbits to increase, and have been steadily taking steps to eradicate the pest. (4.), (5.), (6.), (7.), (8.), (9.), (10.), (11.), (12.), (13.) None. (14.) Three. (15.) Two. (16.) One. (17.) None. *General Remarks.*—The rabbits in this district are confined to the Waipawa and Hawke's Bay Counties, and, though there are rabbits on a good many properties, there are very few on each property, and very often rabbits are seen only at intervals.

From Rabbit Inspector SUTTON, Masterton.

(1.) Hunting with dogs, shooting, trapping; poisoning with phosphorus, arsenic, and bisulphide of carbon. (2.) I would suggest that where rabbits are known to exist on Crown lands the Government should turn out ferrets. (3.) Last winter good work was done by poisoning, and in parts of the district where the settlers worked simultaneously it was very effective, and the rabbits have been kept in check since. (4.) Eighteen. (5.) £494 11s. (6.) 33,320 acres. (7.), (8.), (9.) None. (10.) 101 lb. (11.) 67 lb. (12.) 32 lb. (13.) Unkown. (14.) Thirty-five. (15.) Twenty-three. (16.) Five and seven withdrawn. (17.) John Morrison, Rangituma Block. *General Remarks.*—Contracting with settlers at so much per annum for the destruction of rabbits on Crown lands adjoining their properties is not a success, Crown lands in the Wairarapa District being mostly bush. The rabbits in any numbers are only to be found on the borders of the bush, where they take shelter from the dog-hunters. Therefore, I think, if the price paid for these contracts was expended in ferrets, the result would be more effectual. I find that contracts for poisoning only answer best, as the work can be supervised and money not expended unnecessarily.

From Rabbit Inspector ORBELL, Nelson.

(1.) Poison, trapping, shooting, and fencing. (2.) None. (3.) Fair. (4.), (5.), (6.), (7.), (8.), (9.), (10.), (11.), (12.), (13.), (14.), (15.), (16.), (17.) None. *General Remarks.*—The rabbits in the Nelson District are more numerous in the Wairoa Gorge and Wakefield than in the outlying districts. Notices to destroy rabbits have been served upon owners of land, and rabbits destroyed. On inquiry at the customhouse I am informed no skins have been exported from the Town of Nelson, but some have been shipped coastwise to Wellington.

From Rabbit Inspector BLUNDELL, Blenheim.

(1.) Phosphorized grain, and arsenicized carrots chiefly, the latter not so extensively used as the former, but both have been found very effective. Ferret-breeding has been carried on to a great extent, and on one run 500 have been turned out, but sufficient time has not yet elapsed to be able to prove results. (2.) I would suggest that experiments be tried to prove the efficacy of inoculation, as proposed by a Mr. Willows, in a letter published in the *Australasian* of the 14th April, the experiments to be tried on a small island in the Lower Wairau. (3.) The rabbits have been kept in check to a great extent, but I see no prospect of exterminating them, unless it is by the introduction of the natural enemy, or by some such means as are proposed above. (4.) One. (5.) £80. (6.) 10,000 acres. (7.) Not exceeding 12,000 acres. (8.) 200 lb. (9.) £40. (10.) 80 lb. (11.) 86 lb. (12.) 34 lb. (13.) 306,261. (14.) One. (15.) One. (16.), (17.) None.

From Rabbit Inspector PASSAU, Kaikoura.

(1.) Phosphorized grain and ferrets used in preference to all other means tried. Most of the owners of infested runs breed ferrets and turn them out. All report them as a great success, and I can substantiate the report. (2.) That clause 29 should be more explicit *re* permit to remove ferrets. (3.) Rapid; the stock increasing in numbers and in condition. (4.) Two. (5.) £42 18s. (6.) 3,000 acres. (7.) About 4,000 acres. (8.) 176 lb. (9.) £33. (10.) None. (11.) 86 lb. (12.) 90 lb. (13.) Estimated 40,000. (14.), (15.), (16.), (17.) None. *General Remarks.*—The Act has supplied a long-felt want in this district, particularly as regards the protection of ferrets, although parties breeding them for sale object to a permit being necessary before disposing of them. The wild ferrets are increasing very quickly, and spreading over the back country. There will be a very large decrease in the number of skins exported this year, owing to the landowners using poison instead of traps.

From Rabbit Inspector MACDONALD, Timaru.

(1.) Shooting, trapping, and dogs; a little poison was used without success. (2.) None. (3.) Fair. (4.), (5.), (6.), (7.), (8.), (9.), (10.), (11.), (12.) None. (13.) About 9,000. (14.), (15.), (16.), (17.) None. *General Remarks.*—The rabbit-pest has only just begun to show itself in this part of the colony. Although rabbits have been in the district for the last twenty years, only of late have they appeared to spread. More vigorous measures have been taken of late by most of the landowners upon whose properties the pest exists; and I believe that, by using energetic measures simultaneously, the pest could be kept well under, although, from the rough nature of the country, to completely eradicate them will be a matter of time and a more numerous population.

From Rabbit Inspector FULLARTON, Oamaru.

(1.) Phosphorized grain, dogs, traps, and digging-out. A good many ferrets have been turned out in northern portions of the subdivision. (2.) None. (3.) Good progress has been made in the places where rabbits were formerly very numerous. They are now only to be found in patches. (4.) Two. (5.) £179 14s. 4d. (6.) 7,609 acres. (7.) 7,609 acres. (8.), (9.), (10.), (11.), (12.) None. (13.) 80,000. (14.), (15.), (16.), (17.) None. *General Remarks.*—I consider the Rabbit Act is working well, and the pest is gradually diminishing, especially on those properties where phosphorized grain is systematically laid; and where ferrets have been turned out I expect they will assist greatly in spring and summer in destroying the young rabbits.

From Rabbit Inspector JOHNSON, Dunedin.

(1.) Every effort has been made to compel landowners to poison their properties, and, where default has been made, prosecutions have followed, with good effect. Bisulphate, Forsyth's and Burt's exterminators have been used in my district, but not with any marked success. Phosphorized grain, with oil of anniseed or rodium in autumn (the latter oil being unnecessary at the present season), appears to be the only effectual exterminator known. (2.) In my opinion no change in the existing law, save in the computation of the penalty to be inflicted. I think a scale should be adopted of penalizing a defendant according to the extent of his acreage, as follows: Not exceeding £20 for first 1,000 acres, and not exceeding £1 for every additional 1,000 or fraction of 1,000 acres. The penalties are not sufficiently severe in the case of large landowners. (3.) I consider very satisfactory progress has been made. (4.) Thirteen. (5.) £1,134. (6.) 70,000 acres. (7.) 72,000 acres. (8.) 580 lb. (9.) £108 15s. (10.) None. (11.) 580 lb. (12.) None. (13.) Estimated 700,000. Total from Port Chalmers, as per Customs return, 4,873,891. (14.) Nineteen. (15.) Nineteen. (16.) None. (17.) Frederick Carmichael, Saddle Hill, and McPherson.

From Rabbit Inspector MILES, Naseby.

(1.) During winter months, poison; for remainder of the year, dogging, shooting, trapping, and digging-out. Ferrets have also been turned out at Taieri Lake Station. Some will be turned loose at Linburn, and one or two are using ferrets and nets. (2.) Should recommend that the Maori hen, or weka, be gazetted as a natural enemy. (3.) Rabbits in Maniototo County have not only been checked but considerably reduced; they not being so numerous now as they were this time last year. (4.) One. (5.) £6 10s. (6.) About 700 acres. (7.) About 45,000 acres. (8.) 10 lb. (9.) £2. (10.) None. (11.) 10 lb. (12.) None. (13.) About 400,000. (14.) Four. (15.) One. (16.) Three. (17.) None.

From Rabbit Inspector REES, Clyde.

(1.) Phosphoric poisoning through the winter, and such times as rabbits would take the poisoned grain; supplemented by shooting, dogging, trapping, and ferreting at other times. (2.)

Persistent efforts should be made to protect all natural enemies to the rabbit, and introduce and turn out ferrets or animals of a similar class, provided lambs would be safe from them. (3.) Great and marked progress has been made in getting the pest under, especially on many of the larger runs where the country was poisoned on a face. (4.) Fourteen. (5.) About £787. (6.) About 24,000 acres. (7.) About 64,000 acres. (8.) 700 lb. (9.) £140. (10.) None. (11.) 166 lb. (12.) 524 lb. (13.) Unknown at present. (14.) Nine. (15.) Seven. (16.) Two. (17.) None. *General Remarks.*—Numbers of rabbits killed in Vincent County from 1st April, 1882, to 31st March, 1883: On Wanaka Station, 54,363; on Earnsclough Station, 96,563; on Hawksburn Station, 72,000; on Teviot Station, 27,261; on Mount Pisa Station, 116,720; on Kawarau Station, 118,000; on Galloway Station, 204,000; on Moutere Station, 77,000; on Matakau Station, 30,000; on Morven Hills Station, 60,000; on Ardgour Station, 180,000; on Ida Valley Station, 119,442; on commonages and Crown lands, 65,000; total, 1,220,349. This total represents the number of rabbit killed from which pelts were taken. As the bulk of these were killed by poison, and as from experience I have no reason to doubt that for every poisoned rabbit picked up at least four are undiscovered in burrows and holes, I estimate the number of rabbits actually destroyed in the Vincent County during the twelve months from the 1st April, 1882, to the 31st March, 1883, at 5,000,000.

From Rabbit Inspector BOURCHIER, Queenstown.

(1.) The means adopted in this district have been by phosphorized grain—viz., wheat and oats—as well as trapping, and in some instances shooting. Several of the largest owners have lately turned out ferrets on the different properties belonging to them. (2.) That the Government should turn out large quantities of ferrets, &c., in the spring, when the rabbits are thinned after the winter poisoning, and so keep them under, as that is the time they breed fastest. (3.) There was great progress made during the past year, especially in the winter-time, and I am quite justified in stating that there is not one rabbit in the district this year for every twenty on the same ground as last. But, from both the good feed and splendid season, the rabbits bred extremely fast. (4.) Nineteen. (5.) £411 16s. 6d. (6.) 93,143 acres. (7.) 230,143 acres. (8.) 400 lb. (9.) £75. (10.) 50 lb. (11.) 350 lb. (12.) None. (13.) Over 250,000. (14.) Ten. (15.) Ten. (16.), (17.) None. *General Remarks.*—The rabbits are not nearly so plentiful this year as they were last, and I think that, from the manner in which the different owners are commencing operations this year, there will be far less in this district next season. There is, however, the inaccessibility of the country to be taken into consideration, and it is such that it is necessary to be personally acquainted with the district before any idea of it can properly be formed, rabbits being in places where it is perfectly impossible for men to get at.

From Rabbit Inspector DOUGLASS, Invercargill.

(1.) Phosphorized grain solely during winter; on runs during summer dogs and digging-out; a limited quantity of bisulphide of carbon and a few charcoal fumigators were also used; on farms, trapping and ferreting, and very little shooting. Government fumigators were engaged by farmers adjoining railway-line. (2.) None. (3.) Taking the district as a whole I do not think there is one rabbit to every ten last year. The bush and river frontages are the most difficult to deal with. From close observation I believe the doe-rabbits go into the bush during winter and come on to the river-banks to breed. (4.) Twenty-one. (5.) £1,300. (6.) Open country, 150,000 acres; ground actually poisoned (below snow-line), 65,000 acres; also several hundred miles of bush frontages and small rights in same. (7.) 160,000 acres. (8.) Only 50 lb. from Government. (9.) £9 7s. 6d. (10.) 3,200 lb. prepared grain, at 2d. per lb. (11.) 50 lb. (12.) None. (13.) Impossible to say, returns being made at port of shipment. (14.) Nine. (15.) Eight. (16.) One. (17.) William Stevens, of Beaumont Station (paid); Richard Spence, of Heddon Bush; James Quin, William Walker, and John Smith, of Otautau. *General Remarks.*—The fines for persistent neglect should be heavier. In large holdings it is much cheaper to pay even £20 every month than employ requisite labour. I have found the threat to put men on (under Section 11) most effectual in several cases. Where a block of land is being dealt with, if one man neglects to do his share, his neighbours get restocked before proceedings can be taken, and their time and expenses wasted.

From Rabbit Inspector MACDONALD, Gore.

(1.) Phosphorus-poisoning extensively; fumigating with bisulphate of carbon, charcoal, and sulphur, by exterminators, iodide of potassium, steeline in cartridges, tried in burrows; trapping, spring traps, in the open. (2.) All that the ingenuity of man has as yet discovered has been tried, but, in my opinion, an incentive to summer killing, to encourage extermination at a vital period, would have a sensible impression, viz., a bonus for the young ones, and destroy the incentive to perpetuate the nuisance. (3.) Substantial, and considerable relief has resulted. The summer increase, however, keeps up a never-failing supply. Destroy in the breeding season. (4.) Eighteen. (5.) £258 7s. 9d. (6.) 30,000 acres. (7.) 350,000 acres. (8.) About 400 lb. (9.) About £80. (10.) About 200 lb. (11.) 200 lb. (12.) 10 lb. (13.) Approximately, 900,000. (14.) Fourteen. (15.) Twelve. (16.), (17.) None. *General Remarks.*—I would urge the necessity of bringing pressure upon the Lands Department to adopt a statesmanlike policy in dealing with the under-mentioned classes of unoccupied lands: Lands that have been for years set aside as for settlement under deferred payment, but totally unfit for that purpose; reserves that have no specific purpose; runs that have no intrinsic value beyond the cost of clearing them of rabbits; and endowments for public purposes: all under the control of irresponsible Land Boards, who know nothing of rural economy. In connection with this Act such lands will soon cost more than their fee-simple value.

From Rabbit Inspector HICKSON, Tapanui.

(1.) Every means have been adopted—poisoning with phosphorus in the proper season, dogs, and digging-out with spades, trapping, snaring, Burt's exterminator, bisulphate of carbon, bran and

arsenic, and a material called steeline, made by a person named Steele. (2.) Yes; County Councils should be responsible for commonages and reserves. I would also recommend that duty should be taken off shot, or otherwise duty reduced on both powder and shot. (3.) Great progress has been made, but it will take another season to show the benefit from the continual destruction of the pest. (4.) Six. (5.) £153 10s. (6.) 23,192 acres. (7.) About 47,800 acres. (8.) 1,350 lb. (9.) £287. (10.) 17 lb. (11.) About 850 lb. (12.) About 180 lb. (13.) Not aware of number; twelve persons sent away, 526 bales, averaging $4\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. each. (14.) Thirteen. (15.) Eleven. (16.) Two. (17.) None. *General Remarks.*—I may state that I have seven men employed on weekly wages, who make good work. I move them about on small reserves, or lands which are too small to let by contract, or on large blocks on which there are not many rabbits. This plan I find works well. Two of these are in the Lawrence District—one at the Teviot, one at Tapanui—and three between Rae's Junction and the Beaumont.

STATEMENT of the Number of FERRETS imported by the Government.

Number of shipments made by Agent-General : 32.	Number at Masterton Depôt at this date : 49.
Date of first shipment : March, 1882.	Sexes : 17 males, 32 females.
Number shipped up to date : 1,217.	Number sold : 54.
Total cost : £953.	Total receipts for same : £55 10s.
Number landed alive in New Zealand : 178.	Natural increase up to date : 46.
Number shipped from Melbourne : 241.	Number at Christchurch Depôt at this date : 28.
Dates of shipment : March and April, 1882.	Sexes : 6 males, 22 females.
Total cost : £224.	Number sold : 22.
Number landed alive in New Zealand : 198.	Total receipts for same : £12 5s.
Number at Waimata Depôt at this date : 59.	Natural increase up to date : 13.
Sexes : 25 males, 34 females.	Number distributed to private individuals : 76.
Number sold : 30.	In Otago : 41.
Total receipts for same : £22 10s.	- In Wellington : 26.
Number turned loose at Waimata : 2.	In Marlborough : 9.
Natural increase up to date ; 63.	

From the above it will be seen that 376 ferrets have been landed alive in New Zealand ; to this number must be added 122, the natural increase at the three depôts. It must also be stated that 157 died through distemper attacking them.
30th June, 1883.