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APPENDIX I.

REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF STOCK.

AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

Sheep.—No serious disease affects the sheep of the Auckland District, except at Tauranga, where this year the death-rate, caused by the "Tauranga sheep disease" is excessively high. Further investigation into the cause of this mortality among their sheep is anxiously expected by the farmers of that district, and it must be recognised that this mortality has stopped all progress and settlement, for their land cannot be brought into useful occupation except through the sheep.

During the spring an examination of the flocks last infected with scab was made, and no traces of it remain. Lately a considerable number of Native-owned sheep in the King-country have been examined; most of these sheep have been dipped and are fairly free from external parasites; in some of the older flocks lung-worm is causing considerable loss; but the well-grown lambs from this part of the district show the effect of new country and of fresh grass. Two importations of valuable stud sheep have been made from England during the past year—eleven Shropshire Down ewes and three rams and twenty-five Lincoln rams.

Cattle.—The trade from this district to Taranaki has almost stripped Auckland of cattle, so much so that stores are being brought back to meet the expected demand for turnip feeding. A good stock road from Waikato to the West Coast would develop a large trade in both sheep and cattle, for stock is alternately wanted for the West Coast grass and for the Waikato turnips. Under the provisions of the Diseased Cattle Act ten head have been destroyed.

Rabbits.—The rabbit is present in small numbers throughout the greater part of the Auckland Provincial District, but except in the King-country it cannot be considered to exist as a nuisance; even there it increases slowly when compared with the more southern parts of the colony; perhaps the most marked difference here during the last three years is that they were then found in patches (in the King-country), and that they are now more evenly distributed. An inspection of this country was made during the last autumn, and it showed that the inducement held out to the Natives by the threepence-per-skin bonus has had the effect of keeping the pest in hand. On some of the larger estates in the Waikato, a little rabbit killing has been carried on, but the rabbit need not be seriously considered except in the King-country, and there it would be quickly disposed of by settlement.

Auckland.

E. CLIFTON.

NAPIER DISTRICT.

Sheep.—Owing to the excessive rainfall during the last season, and consequent continual growth of feed, the sheep are not so fat as usual, the softness of the grass precluding their getting into the high condition which Hawke's Bay sheep are noted for. From the same cause there has been heavy mortality amongst the hoggets, produced by want of substance in the feed. Lice, though present amongst the flocks, are kept within reasonable bounds, owners, with few exceptions, paying attention to dipping for this pest. The percentage of increase has been good, averaging, I should say, from 70 to 90 per cent.; in some instances the increase in paddock-flocks has reached 127 per cent. The clip of wool was light owing to the continual rainfall.

Before leaving this subject I think it not out of place to say, with regard to the mortality amongst hoggets or weaners, that owners would find great benefit from dry feeding with hay or oaten chaff. The distribution of this, in properly constructed feed-racks, made so as to protect the contents from wet, should be commenced early, and before the hoggets get into a weak state from