

(4) Native and Imported Game Conservation

(a) *Ducks*.—While the district does not embrace any extensive areas suitable for grey and mallard, they are numerous in several small areas and provided fair sport for a number of local residents.

Paradise duck are numerous in most remote valleys of the high mountain region, and, while numbers were shot in the more accessible areas, the remoteness of their habitat provided immunity to many. Shooting is not permitted in the valley of the Haast River where this species exists in large numbers, thus providing a reservoir from which adjacent areas are naturally restocked.

(b) *Californian Quail*.—Although this fine sporting bird is found in considerable numbers throughout the district, it is apparent that the population is decreasing.

(c) *Chukor (Indian Hill Partridge)*.—This species, which is of comparatively recent acclimatization, is now represented by strong colonies spread over a very wide range of mountainous terrain, and appears to be in no way inimical to native or other bird-life or pastoral interests in their remote habitat.

(d) *Canadian Geese*.—These birds are numerous in the Lakes Hawea and Wanaka region, where their numbers have increased to such an extent that they were damaging crops and pastures, and permits to kill them during the close season were issued to the run-holders concerned.

(5) Vermin Control

Bounties payable under the scheme operated by the South Island Vermin Control Council were paid on tokens as under :—

Stoats' tails	..	..	..	..	..	399
Ferrets' tails	..	..	..	..	..	273
Hedgehogs' snouts	..	..	..	..	..	54
Hawks' feet (pairs)	..	..	..	..	..	272
German owls' heads	..	..	..	..	..	28

F. FERAL MEAT FOR EUROPE

With the termination of the special organization previously in being, certain activities have been assumed by the Wildlife Branch.

The great impetus given to the frozen rabbit export industry by the special organization has further increased and a wider coverage of rabbit-infested areas by collecting services now obtains.

Whereas prior to the war only three rabbit packing and exporting works (all in Southland) were operating, the number has now increased to twelve, ten being in Southland, Otago, and South Canterbury, and two in the North Island.

The average annual export, which, prior to and during the early years of the war (exports ceased after 1941) was 1,250,000, increased by approximately 200 per cent. last year, and a further large increase can be expected during the present export year. The value of this avenue of utilization of good food which would otherwise be wasted, both from the point of view of feeding the hungry people of Europe and of increasing the monetary value of the country's exports, will be apparent.

VI. PATRIOTIC PURPOSES

The financial year ended 30th September, 1945, was for the Patriotic Purposes Branch a very busy one. The expenditure of the National Patriotic Fund Board for the year under review was £514,792, which was much lower than that of the previous year, £1,857,281, but this does not present a true picture of the work involved owing to the fact that major expenditure in one year may be made in anticipation of requirements