

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRIES,
AND COMMERCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1919.

Wellington, 16th July, 1919.

The Hon. Ministers of Agriculture and of Industries and Commerce.

THE virtual conclusion of the war during the period under review naturally brought great prospective relief from the many handicaps under which the work of the Department had been carried on since 1914. It will, however, be some time before the complete repatriation of our Forces and the removal of the many restrictions due to the war can restore the position fully to normal and allow of unhampered development.

The control of the Department was entrusted to me as from June, 1918, and I thoroughly appreciate the loyal and cordial assistance since rendered by the Assistant Director-General.

REORGANIZATION.

A scheme of reorganization of the Department has been gradually but steadily carried out during the past twelve months, and is now completed so far as the existing personnel is concerned. The establishment of improved services in certain branches, which will be mentioned later, has, however, still to be carried out.

Prior to the present reorganization the Department was subdivided into four main Divisions—viz., Live-stock, Fields, Dairy, and Horticulture. An important point subject to criticism in connection with that system was the fact that two separate sets of Inspectors were carrying out inspection duty on farms and other landed properties, the one dealing with the inspection of live-stock, and the other (forming a considerable portion of the Fields Division) dealing with rabbits and noxious weeds. With a view to increasing efficiency and avoiding duplication of energy the new system provides that only one set of officers, all designated "Inspectors of Stock," carry out these previously separate duties, and already the good results from this change are becoming apparent.

The Live-stock Division is now well established on its new basis. One feature of its rearrangement lies in the abolition of central control as previously existing, and the establishment of four distinct organizations, with headquarters at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin respectively. Each of these district organizations is under the control of a District Superintendent, associated with whom is a Principal District Inspector. All the work of the Division in each district is controlled by the Superintendent and the Principal District Inspector, who in turn are responsible to the Director of the Division. The clerical work hitherto performed by the responsible clerical officers designated "District Agents," who were controlled only from headquarters in Wellington, is now brought under the district system, each district having a "District Clerk" appointed, who deals with the accounts, correspondence, &c., connected with the internal working of the district organization, being aided in this by clerical officers stationed, when necessary, at the more important outlying centres. Under this district system officers working in the field are kept closely in touch with their immediate controlling officer, efficiency and thoroughness of work being thereby promoted. Controlling officers are also able to keep closer in touch with the work of each individual and know how that work is being carried out.

The Division is now becoming ready for an expansion of its activities, particularly from the educational and instructional standpoint, and the return of expert officers who have been on active service will facilitate this. An especially notable feature of the work of the trained Inspectors of Stock has been the giving of advice to farmers and assistance of a first-aid nature in connection with the various ailments affecting their stock, in addition to the regular work of the prevention and control of contagious disease. With the reavailability of professional men an extension of the system which was initiated in the Bay of Plenty, of subsidizing capable veterinarians who would be willing to undertake practice in outlying districts, is intended, it being realized that the conservation of the health and the improvement of the quality of our live-stock are of primary importance to the Dominion.