

The Department has co-operated with the Repatriation Board in controlling the farming operations of that Department's training-farms at Tauherenikau (Wairarapa) and Avonhead (Christchurch). Arrangements have also now been made with the Defence Department to take over the control of its farms at the Pukeora and Hammer Sanatoria. The necessary finances are provided by the Repatriation Board and Defence Department respectively. Mention must also be made of the Wairarapa Training-farm, near Masterton. This consists of 730 acres vested in the Government by a body of Wairarapa settlers, who also provided the live-stock necessary. It is managed by a local committee, two of whom are nominated by the Government, while a departmental officer is an additional member. This farm is at present utilized for training returned soldiers in farming, and is being rapidly developed on sound lines.

The first complete official year of the Live-stock Division under the scheme of reorganization has shown satisfactory results, and the efficiency of the service should be still more marked during the current year. The already wide scope of the Division has been extended on two special lines—those of pig-raising and wool-handling—by the appointment of an Instructor in Swine Husbandry and a Wool Instructor. It is confidently hoped that the very practical work now being undertaken by the former officer will go far towards arresting the decline in our pig stock, and stimulate this important branch of farming. The work of the Wool Instructor, both directly and by tending to co-ordinate with local technical instruction on the same subject, should also help towards increasing the returns of our smaller wool-growers.

In connection with the health of live-stock—which continues on a generally high level as regards serious disease—it is satisfactory to note that condemnations for tuberculosis in cattle inspected on slaughter again show some reduction. Measures for the control of cattle-tick in the North Auckland districts are well in hand. During the year regulations under the Stock Act were issued, giving the Department comprehensive powers to deal with the position. In order to cause as little dislocation as possible and enable farmers to adapt their practice, the regulations have been brought into force gradually. It is, however, hoped to apply the control system in its entirety during the coming year. The erection of cattle-dips in the affected districts is proceeding, with the assistance of the Department. The entire absence of tick fever in the Dominion may again be noted.

The rabbit pest, which had got ahead in many districts during the war years, has had very active attention in the period under review. The co-operation of the great majority of landholders is well demonstrated by the largely increased sales of phosphorized pollard and other rabbit poison from the Department's depots. The amending Rabbit Nuisance Act of 1918 has proved to have been quite necessary, however, and every care is taken in its administration. It is unfortunate that rabbit-netting remains very scarce and at an almost prohibitive price. The general position of control was rendered very much more difficult by the extraordinarily high market values ruling for rabbit-skins during the year, affording a strong incentive to rabbit-farming in some districts. It is satisfactory to note that on the whole station-holders and farmers generally have done good work in the control of rabbits, and it is obvious that, given a still further development of co-operation between the settlers and the Department, the rabbit pest is capable of being got thoroughly well in hand throughout the Dominion.

The control of noxious weeds presents many difficulties, and in view of this it must be admitted that excellent work has been done by the divisional officers. An amending Bill has been drafted with a view of enabling the work of control to be carried out more satisfactorily and with less openings for the raising of difficulties between departmental officers and settlers. It is hoped that this measure may be introduced during the coming session. The Bill includes provision for making blackberry the only weed of general application in the compulsory schedule, and giving local authorities the option of declaring other weeds as being within this schedule for the purposes of the administration of the Act within their districts.

The meat-inspection services of the Live-stock Division have been well and efficiently maintained. The termination of the Imperial purchase of meat and the resumption of open trading will make further calls upon the energy and efficiency of the officers engaged in this branch of the service. The inspection of dairies supplying cities and towns has been carried out satisfactorily. The inspection of live-stock for disease has continued on the same lines as heretofore, and the activity shown by the officers engaged in this work is indicated by the number of diseased animals which have been condemned and destroyed, thus removing sources of danger for the spread of infection to other animals.

The inspection of manure-sterilizing in Australia and India has made less call on the Inspectors than in previous years, owing to the much smaller quantity of bonedust brought into the Dominion. Good work, however, has been done by detecting and preventing attempts to evade the regulations by shipping to the Dominion animal-manures which have not undergone the sterilizing process necessary to prevent the risk of introduction of dangerous disease.

At the Wallaceville Laboratory a considerable volume of work has been done. It is intended to extend the scope of the investigation work at this institution.

The branch of the Live-stock Division dealing with poultry continues to do very efficient work. The demand for the services of the Instructors is in excess of their capacity to keep pace with it, and increase in the instructional staff is desirable. As regards demonstrational and experimental work, the position of the Department's poultry-station at Milton requires consideration, the class of soil on which it has been established being really not suitable for poultry-farming, while the plant is becoming out of date. The question of whether the existing buildings on the present site shall be renovated or replaced by up-to-date structures, or whether a more suitable area, preferably in the same district, shall be acquired, is under consideration.

The Dairy Division has handled a big year's work with success, well maintaining also the close touch and friendly relations with the industry which have long obtained in this branch of the Department's service. The capability of the Division to give the industry a sound economic lead as regards up-to-date developments in the manufacture of milk-products, more especially with reference to milk-powder, was much enhanced by the visit of investigation made by Mr. W. Dempster to America and Europe. The value and helpfulness of this officer's report, published by the Department, has been widely acknowledged in the industry. The investigation has thrown much-needed