

Cattle-tick.—During the year the regulations for the control of cattle-tick have been much more stringently enforced than during the previous year, and the construction of cattle-dips in the tick-infested areas has been considerably accelerated in consequence. The Government subsidy of pound for pound up to £150 towards the construction of public cattle-dips which are erected in conformity with the Government plans and specifications has been approved in connection with thirty-four dips. Of this number nineteen have already been completed, seven are in course of construction, and work has not yet commenced on the remaining eight. The plan on which the dips are being built has given general satisfaction, and those so far completed have been erected in a satisfactory manner. Stockowners and auctioneering companies in the tick-infested areas have co-operated well with the Department's officers in fighting the tick pest, and every endeavour will be made to ensure a continuation of this desirable condition. The practice of passing all cattle through a dip immediately prior to their being offered for sale at public auctions has become practically universal in the badly infested areas, and is freely submitted to by stockowners, notwithstanding that there is no provision in the regulations enforcing such practice. The beneficial effect which dipping has on the general health and well-doing of the cattle, quite outside its tick-killing qualities, is being recognized and appreciated by stockowners. During the past year advantage has been taken of every available source of information, for the purpose of ascertaining as accurately as possible just what localities are affected with tick, and our knowledge on this point is now fairly accurate. The necessity for strengthening and enlarging the scope of the regulations has been recognized, and the defining of areas for the better control of the tick within those areas, and for the protection of clean districts, is also being carefully gone into, and recommendations regarding new or amending regulations towards this end will shortly be submitted.

LIVE-STOCK STATISTICS.

Sheep.—The enumeration of sheep in the Dominion as at 30th April, 1920, showed a decrease of 1,919,048 when compared with the figures for the previous year, this large decrease being accounted for by heavy slaughtering for export, a slightly reduced percentage of lambs, and the retention of less breeding-ewes for the upkeep of the flocks. The following table shows the number of sheep in the Dominion for the stated years :—

Year.	Stud and Flock Rams (Two-tooth and over).	Breeding-ewes.	Other Sheep.	Lambs.	Total.
1913	313,690	12,521,036	4,371,257	6,985,827	24,191,810
1914	321,869	12,920,176	4,377,936	7,178,782	24,798,763
1915	315,251	12,615,341	4,625,681	7,318,148	24,901,421
1916	316,131	12,892,767	4,682,298	6,896,954	24,788,150
1917	329,230	13,260,169	4,530,471	7,150,516	25,270,386
1918	325,111	13,022,034	5,295,269	7,895,888	26,538,302
1919	321,304	12,341,900	5,734,029	7,431,321	25,828,584
1920	306,583	11,568,549	5,723,459	6,315,915	23,914,506

The present year's enumeration (1921) shows a further decrease of 634,939, which means a total reduction of the flocks during the past three years of over 3,000,000, a matter for very serious thought.

Cattle.—The statistics collected in January, 1920, show a very satisfactory increase over the previous year in dairy cows and bulls, other cattle showing a slight decrease. The numbers in the respective classes are shown in the following table :—

Year.	Bulls (all Ages).	Dairy Cows.	Other Cattle.	Total.
1908	30,170	591,617	1,151,539	1,773,326
1911	40,670	633,733	1,345,568	2,020,171
1916	50,858	750,323	1,616,310	2,417,491
1917	49,930	777,439	1,747,861	2,575,230
1918	51,935	793,215	2,024,315	2,869,465
1919	56,706	826,135	2,152,637	3,035,478
1920	57,999	893,454	2,150,492	3,101,945

Swine.—The decrease in numbers of swine which has taken place for some years past has this year been arrested, and I am pleased to record an increase, as revealed in the last enumeration, of 31,482. The available figures since 1910 are as follows: 1911, 348,754; 1916, 297,501; 1917, 283,770; 1918, 258,694; 1919, 235,347; 1920, 266,829.

Horses.—The enumeration of horses in the Dominion taken in January, 1920, showed a continued decrease, the following being the figures for the past three years: 1918, 373,600; 1919, 363,188; 1920, 346,407.

SLAUGHTER OF STOCK FOR EXPORT.

The term of the contract with the Imperial Government for the purchase of all meat slaughtered for export expired on 30th June, 1920, and at that date a considerable quantity of meat purchased