

RABBIT NUISANCE.

The report of the Director of the Live-stock Division goes very fully into the matter of the administration of the Rabbit Nuisance Act and the present condition of the country as regards rabbit infestation. It is satisfactory to note that conditions generally show improvement. With the exercise of continuous vigilance, and of consistent work by settlers, the progressive improvement which has been evidenced during the past two or three years can be continued.

Rabbit Boards have, in most instances, proved very useful factors in rabbit control and destruction. There are some points in connection with the present legislation regarding Rabbit Boards which require consideration, including the question of the use to which the finances of Boards can be applied. Certain phases of this and of other matters have been submitted by Boards themselves, as requiring amendments of the Act. Some proposed amendments have been drafted, but, having regard to the number of amendments which have already been made in the original Act, it is submitted that it would be a much better policy to avoid the making of further detail amendments, and instead draft an up-to-date consolidating measure in the hope that it will serve requirements for a number of years to come. This, of course, would take time, and a good deal of discussion with Rabbit Boards and other organizations in connection with it would be desirable.

NOXIOUS WEEDS.

The administration of the Noxious Weeds Act, is still, as always, a matter full of difficulty. While the position of many farmers in connection with noxious-weeds control is fully realized, the fact yet remains that the extent to which good work is done is principally dependent upon the energy and enterprise of the farmers themselves. It would be a bad policy to ignore the risk and allow the more dangerous weeds, at any rate, to flourish unchecked, yet cases frequently arise where the full enforcement of the provisions of the Act on individual properties would mean bankruptcy for the occupier. The Department's officers are doing their best, by tactful and discreet methods, to get as much control work done as is possible in the circumstances, and it is satisfactory to note that many settlers do their best to meet practicable requirements.

Blackberry and ragwort are by far the most troublesome pests, and active work is in progress in the endeavour to find better methods of coping with them. Systematic experiments are being carried out in connection with blackberry-destruction. Further, Dr. Tillyard, of the Cawthron Institute, is, by arrangement with the Department, endeavouring while abroad to find a parasite which will deal with blackberry, also a parasite to deal with ragwort. The best results are naturally hoped for, but the possibility of their attainment (and there is no more than a possibility) does not warrant any cessation of other endeavours to deal with these pests as well as circumstances permit.

NAURU AND OCEAN ISLANDS PHOSPHATE.

During the nine months ended 31st March, 1926, 55,310 tons of phosphate were shipped to New Zealand, representing 21·99 per cent. of the shipments from these islands during that period. The following figures show the quantities and destination of phosphate-rock shipments during the period the British Phosphate Commission has managed the business:—

Year ended 30th June.	United Kingdom.		Australia.		New Zealand.		Other Countries.	
	Tons.	Per Cent.	Tons.	Per Cent.	Tons.	Per Cent.	Tons.	Per Cent.
1921	16,750	4·60	265,914	72·97	17,100	4·69	64,660	17·74
1922	15,550	4·30	171,286	47·39	38,500	10·65	136,150	37·66
1923 .. ..	..	..	203,446	64·84	51,550	16·43	58,762	18·73
1924 .. ..	..	..	320,031	70·81	60,850	13·47	71,028	15·72
1925 .. ..	..	..	337,298	71·66	98,790	20·99	34,635	7·35
Nine months to 31st March, 1926	..	..	183,500	72·96	55,310	21·99	12,710	5·05

Under the Nauru Agreement New Zealand contributed 16 per cent. of the capital required for acquiring phosphate rights in Nauru and Ocean Islands; Great Britain and Australia contributed 42 per cent. each. The agreement provided that the three countries would be entitled to take phosphate rock from the islands in similar proportions annually, these quantities to be readjusted at the end of five-yearly intervals on the basis of the actual requirements of each of the three countries. During the first five years Great Britain took only a very small quantity of phosphate, and during the fifth year Australia took approximately 72 per cent. of the total output, while New Zealand took approximately 21 per cent. The question of a reallocation of proportions