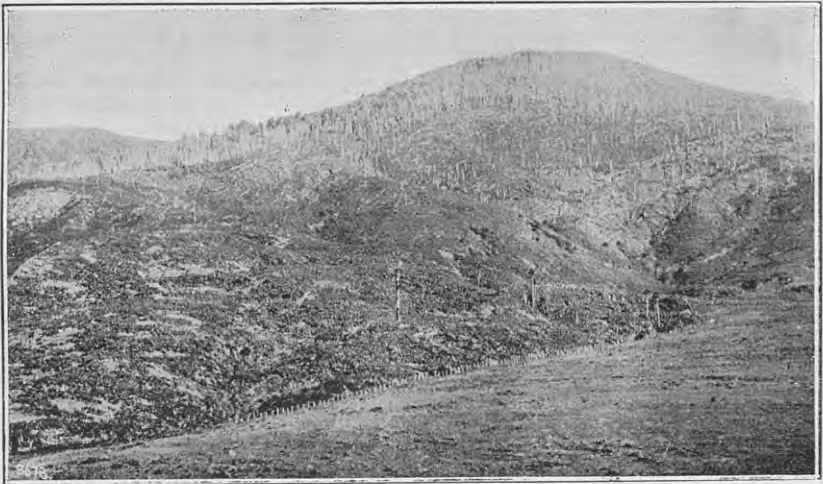


THE CONTROL OF INDUCED FERN.

The control of induced fern presents difficulties that are not so noticeable when breaking in natural fern country. Induced fern generally follows either an unsuccessful burn or else develops on bush-burn country where the grass mixture sown fails to permanently keep its hold on the land—that is, where a mixture not suitable for the district is used. On comparatively flat land induced fern should never become particularly troublesome, for the same methods as applied against natural fern can be carried out. But on steep, rugged country induced fern is often extremely bad,



BUSH-BURN COUNTRY (ON HILL) REVERTING INTO FERN.

Holding-paddock in foreground clear, owing to heavy stocking at intervals with sheep.

and when once well established is exceedingly difficult to eradicate. On hilly bush-burn country likely to turn into fern within a few years of sowing very particular attention has to be paid to the mixture used. Cocksfoot and rye-grass are generally the predominating seeds that are sown, and for some years the land may keep up a two-sheep standard. In a few years, however, the rye-grass disappears, and soil-creep occurring on the bare ground leaves the isolated cocksfoot plants raised above the general level, in which condition they are very liable to be actually pulled out by sheep. Fern then begins to appear, and, the carrying-capacity having dropped, sufficient stock cannot be maintained to keep it down. In a few years the fern attains the mastery, and frequent firing of the fern, followed by insufficient stocking, only makes its dominance