

WOOL

The Department's activities in relation to the wool industry are as follows:—

This season there has been a return to the auction system of selling wool after seven years of the appraisal method used during the war. The New Zealand Wool Disposals Commission—the local representative of the joint organization in London—which puts a minimum reserve or “floor” under wool prices, has also operated for the first time. At the earlier sales of the series, wool sold freely and the finer sorts in particular brought excellent prices, but as the season has progressed competition for the stronger and plainer types has fallen away, and the Commission has bought in substantial quantities at the reserve prices. It is too early to predict the average price for our clip over the season, but indications are that it will be well in advance of last year's appraisal figure of 14-8d. per pound.

Extension Work.—While the ending of the war has brought to a conclusion lecturing work for the Army Education and Welfare Service, a new avenue has been opened up in the form of lectures and demonstrations to rehabilitation trainees. New material is being prepared for use with Young Farmers' clubs, which in pre-war years accounted for the bulk of the Section's lecturing programme.

Experiments and Investigations.—A small portable experimental sheep-dip, with a capacity of 100 gallons, was designed for use at Wallaceville, and has now been completed and proved its worth for experimental dipping with new materials. Further small-scale trials with D.D.T. and Gammexane have been carried out, and in collaboration with the Ruakura Animal Research Station all the sheep on that property have been dipped with a new Gammexane preparation of commercial origin. Results to date are promising.

Some work has been done on the problem of the control of moths in stored wool. A large quantity of low-grade slippe wool stored at freezing-works had become very badly infested with moths, and tests were made with D.D.T. and Gammexane as a means of control. The most practical method was found to be the use of Gammexane smoke generators, by means of which the wool was treated *in situ* with good results and at relatively low cost. Any other method would have involved very considerable expense for labour in shifting and spraying and/or fumigating the bales.

Tests of Wool-marketing Preparations.—Tests have been carried out on further samples of materials submitted for trial. Several of these have been successful, and a total of five marking fluids have been approved for sale. It is noticeable that some of those manufacturers who were given twelve months' grace in which to sell off their old and unsatisfactory products have been making strenuous efforts to improve their formulae to meet the requirements of the Stock Act, which will come fully into force as from 1st May, 1947. It is anticipated that complaints from overseas or local wool-buyers about deleterious marking-materials found in New Zealand wool will be eliminated.

Testing-house and Wool Standards.—The co-operation of the Wool Disposals Commission has been forthcoming in the institution of these two projects, but progress has been slow to date, on account of difficulty in procuring certain materials and equipment. A core sampling device has been built, similar to the instrument used by the Customs authorities in the United States, by which truly representative samples of wool can be drawn from deep down in the wool-bale. Suitable wool for making up wool count standards is now being procured, and when the collection is complete sets of count standards in suitable containers will be made up and issued at a nominal charge to those sections of the industry which will find them useful for reference purposes.

Corriedale Sheep for China.—A thousand Corriedale sheep selected, purchased, and shipped to China on behalf of UNRRA were accompanied by an officer of the Wool Section, which was responsible for the planning of the pen accommodation aboard ship and the calculation and selection of the necessary rations for the sheep on the voyage.

Visit to Australia.—The Wool Supervisor of the Department, accompanied by an officer from Massey College and one from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, visited Australia in 1946 to study the sheep and wool industry, wool research, and extension methods. The trip was financed jointly by the New Zealand Wool Board and the Department of Agriculture. A mass of useful information and data was obtained and a report made to the New Zealand Wool Board and the Department of Agriculture.

The Wool-clip.—The wool-clip for 1946-47 has been more attractive than that for last year, due to the better seasonal conditions over the Dominion as a whole. The South Island, for the most part, seems to have had a fairly good wool season, although Dunedin and Invercargill have suffered slightly from seasonal conditions, which caused tenderness in the wool. Merino and half-bred wools in the Christchurch and Timaru sales have been excellent, and crossbreds, though not so good, are up to standard. The wools appear to have been well grown, and are mostly light in condition and of a good colour. Dunedin and Invercargill wools, apart from slight tenderness, were light in condition and fairly well grown.

The North Island wools vary considerably in most districts. The Auckland and North Auckland wools appear to be light in condition, poorly grown, and off-coloured, though the unshorn hogget wools were excellent. Hawke's Bay wool, on the other hand, is much heavier in condition and well grown, with good staple length. The earlier wools showed traces of seed. Again, as in Auckland, the unshorn hogget wools were excellent. The Wellington wools have been fairly consistent throughout the season, being light in condition, of good staple length, and fairly good colour. There has been