

with straw, and consequently the number lost is comparatively few. He, however, anticipates a substantial loss at the lambing-time between weakness of the ewes and loss of those left behind in the snow.

12. J. Shea, holder of small grazing-run, one of the late Highfield blocks, brought his sheep down to the front fence and hand-fed them with oaten sheaf taken from his Wedderburn farm. He described in a somewhat gloomy fashion his anticipated future loss. No doubt this will be considerable, but the cause is attributable to the poor class of sheep he had purchased with which to stock the run. These in an ordinarily severe winter would have suffered a large mortality, which will be naturally increased by the late severe weather.

D. Messent, the holder of nearly 1,000 acres and the owner of about four hundred sheep, was able to get his small flock together and hand-feed them for several weeks. About thirty of his strongest ewes died from either hand-feeding or some other unknown cause attributed to the effect of the snow.

R. Johnstone and Sons hold several small grazing-runs, on which they run about a thousand sheep. Of these the present loss is about 5 per cent.

Hawkdun Station; F. J. Dalgety; Run 228; 14,000 sheep: This run had an average depth of over 3 ft. of snow, both sheep and cattle being unable to move about anywhere for days. The manager, Mr. Wilson, displayed great energy and pluck in proceeding to the head of the Manuhierikia River, rescuing about fifty head of cattle and bringing them down to the station, where they were hand-fed for some time. He also set snow-ploughs to work along with men shovelling the tussock clear and dragging the small mobs of sheep on to the bared patches, and by these means he saved a good many that otherwise would have perished. Meantime, although many have recovered, there will still be great mortality among the young sheep and ewes at lambing-time. Apparently the vigorous efforts of the manager saved the run from disastrous loss. He cannot give an estimate of actual loss, although apparently it cannot be less than 4,200. Sixteen hundred hoggets and 3,000 ewes have been hand-fed. The manager will be satisfied if he saves 70 per cent. of the flock.

Blackstone Hill Station; Ross and Glendining, lessees; Runs No. ; 36,000 sheep: The losses on the Home Hills portion are very serious. The flock on this block number about 18,000, and of this number not less than from 6,000 to 8,000 must have perished. The shepherd estimates that at least 70 per cent. of the hoggets must have died. In some cases small mobs, varying from twenty to sixty sheep, have been found dead. They have on this part fifteen men skinning sheep at 6d. per head, and at the rate of 600 per day for the last nine days. The manager was seen by us on the 20th, and from him we found that the numbers on Home Hills, Lauder, and Blackstone Blocks were 18,000, 9,000, and 9,000 respectively. His estimate of loss is somewhat as follows: On the Hills Creek Block there were 6,000 hoggets: of these he expects a loss of 75 per cent.—4,500. On Idaburn Block, 2,000 hoggets and young wethers: on these a loss of 50 per cent.—1,000. Of the balance of 10,000 stronger sheep he appears to us over sanguine in saying that the loss will be about 1,500, or equal of Home Hills Block. Total loss, 7,000. On the Lauder Block it is an extremely difficult matter to estimate, as very few sheep are seen dead or alive. He, therefore, hopes for the best. At the same time, he remarked that as the snowdrifts are still heavy, appearances point—from the fact that he found several lots buried in the drifts—to many having perished in this way. If this surmise is correct, it may result in a much greater loss than his estimate of about 25 per cent. On Blackstone Hill Block the 9,000 have suffered less than on the other run. This is accounted for by the fact that about 3,000 of these were fed with oat sheaves and hay, and the balance fared better on the warmer faces of this country. The loss on this block will not exceed a thousand. All these make up a total of 7,000, 2,250, and 1,000—10,250. Roughly speaking, the manager's estimate is ten thousand from the total flock. Judging, however, by his description of loss and that given by Messrs. Armour and McDonald (shepherds), and also from the daily tally of sheep-skinning by the fifteen men now at work, and who, according to McDonald, had not more than half overtaken the Hills Creek Block, the loss appears to us to be underestimated on Lauder and Home Hills. Taking these stations, our estimate is about twelve thousand, and if the loss directly and indirectly is not more, we shall be glad to hear about it later on.

Laidlaw, Matakanui Run; 18,000 sheep: This run had an average depth of from 2 ft. to 3 ft. of snow. It lay without a break for upwards of four weeks, when a thaw set in for a day which partly cleared many of the faces, thus relieving the sheep which had survived. Up till the 24th—that is, twelve days after the snowfall, it was impossible to do anything. Efforts were then made with a grader and "snow-raking" all over the lower country, thus enabling the sheep to get on to and nibble the frozen tussock. The snow-raking was carried on by the shepherds and a band of volunteers from Tinkers'. By their efforts many of the back-country or Five-mile sheep were dragged on to the faces, and the bulk of those so rescued were expected to survive. The disposition of the flock was somewhat as follows: (a.) 2,700 ewes were mostly on 223b, the balance of the ewes being on the Eastern or Lauder Block. Of the whole, about 70 per cent. will be saved. (b.) On the Blackbush Block the numbers were 2,400 (700 ewes and 1,700 dry sheep). Of the ewes, 200 skins have already been sent in. The dry sheep have not yet been skinned. (c.) On the Five-mile Block there are 1,400 sheep (wethers) doubtful. Tinkers' Paddock contained 400 ewes and 1,700 dry sheep. The former have 100 skins sent in; dry-sheep skinning not yet commenced. Station Creek Paddock: 300 ewes. These have been fed and have fared well. Lauder Paddock: 800 ewes. These will suffer to the extent of at least 200. Wether Hill: About 6,000 were turned out. Snow-raking was started early and the death-rate has been kept down considerably. The balance are in the Station Paddock. It is impossible to make even an approximate estimate. Laidlaw is, however, satisfied that 30 per cent. (5,400) will cover the death-rate. Of course, as in other cases, mortality will be the great loss; a secondary loss will be the loss of ewes at lambing and the poor percentage of lambs that must result from the condition of the ewes. A further loss will be a break in the wool, and, of course, a lower price will be realised.