

the invoices are posted to the Controller by the brokers concerned, it is not always possible to ascertain definitely the date on which payment should be made. Care is exercised, however, to ensure that the amount is remitted within the period specified by the *Gazette* notice.

General.—The accounts in connection with wool, sheep-skins, and hides are, generally speaking, in a very satisfactory condition. In order to ensure the arrival in London of a complete set of documents the practice of forwarding all copies of invoices by one mail has been discontinued, and it is now customary to forward copies of invoices by separate routes. The statements of administration expenses for March quarter, bearing the certificate of the Controller and Auditor-General, were ready for despatch by the next outgoing mail, and in the case of all other entries in the statement of receipts and payments, supporting documents have invariably accompanied the relative statements.

Bills of Lading and Shipping Documents.—The bills of lading and shipping documents in connection with shipments of wool are being forwarded regularly by the best possible mails, care always being exercised to ensure that as many as possible of the duplicate documents accompany the steamer to which they refer, while the original documents are forwarded by the next direct mail.

Butter-fat.—Daily statements are forwarded to the Treasury, with supporting bank receipts, in respect of payments of the butter-fat levy, while Forms C, furnishing particulars of butter supplied for local consumption, are dealt with weekly. The accounts in connection with this branch of the Department's activities are satisfactory.

Audit.—The whole accounts of the Department, with the exception of that in connection with butter-fat, have been audited to the 31st March, and a special effort was made by the Controller and Auditor-General to audit the Department's accounts and enable them to be furnished to the Treasury in time to be included in the accounts for the financial year ended the 31st March.

In view of the volume of work entailed in the various branches of the Department, and the very considerable number of payments which have been made, this position must be regarded as entirely satisfactory, and it is specially creditable to those officers directly concerned in keeping the various accounts that the Audit queries have been slight and comparatively few. In no case has any serious error been disclosed, and any necessary adjustments have always been effected with the minimum of difficulty.

STAFF AND ORGANIZATION.

The Department of Imperial Government Supplies has as far as practicable endeavoured to constitute itself an intelligence bureau for the collection and distribution of information relating to those matters with which it has been concerned. It has published a bulletin (twice weekly) showing its operations, and has prepared monthly statements of a similar nature for the information of Ministers, all Departments of the Dominion Government concerned, the Overseas Shipowners' Committee, and to the representatives of the associated banks of New Zealand, and has further acquainted the Imperial Government each week by telegraph of the stocks of meat in the freezing-works, as well as furnishing other information of interest.

From the inauguration of the Department in March, 1915, the duties of all the officers connected with the Department have been of a particularly strenuous character. At the outset no organization or machinery existed which could have been utilized to carry out the business arrangements of the activities which the Department set out to control. The organization has had to be built up and the staff added to from time to time as new responsibilities were attached to the Department.

The policy of the Department has been to conduct its business on commercial lines, with a free utilization of modern methods and mechanical appliances essential to systematically and commercially handling business of