

FELLMONGERING.

Results for the 1918–19 season show that 2,220,901 skins, valued at £761,548, an average cost of 82·29d. per skin, were issued to fellmongers for treatment. The average pull of wool was 4·09 lb., and the average percentage of valueless pelts was 9·13.

Fellmongers have been paid for their services at the following rates: Fellmongering, 2½d. per pound on weight of wool; curing pelts, 3s. 9d. per dozen (casks extra). From the 1st January, 1920, owing to the higher cost of labour and material, these rates have been increased by ¼d. per pound on slipe wool, 48/50s and upwards, and by ⅓d. per pound on lower grades; while the rate for curing has been increased by 9d. per dozen.

The total amount paid to fellmongers for slipping wool and curing pelts was £116,204.

STAFF AND ORGANIZATION.

The staff of Wool and Sheep-skin Valuers and Inspectors of Wool-scouring and Fellmongering Works have throughout given the greatest care and attention to their important duties.

Members of the office staff have worked at high pressure throughout the year and have been indefatigable in the careful discharge of the work entrusted to them. This loyal co-operation has contributed materially to the efficiency of the Department.

I regret to have to record that serious ill health compelled the retirement of the Chief Accountant, Mr. D. Rutherford, in February, 1920, and his death occurred on the 6th June. Mr. Rutherford, who had been Chief Accountant from the inauguration of the Department in March, 1915, always devoted himself unsparingly to his duties, and his demise at the early age of thirty-three is deeply regretted.

I have also to record the resignation in April, 1920, of Mr. F. H. Taylor from the position of Assistant Controller, which he had held from the inception of the Department, and whose work was always characterized by special thoroughness and enthusiasm.

Mr. T. R. Lees, late Officer in Charge of the Wool and Sheep-skin Section, has been appointed Assistant Controller, and Mr. G. C. Smith, late Assistant Accountant, has been appointed Chief Accountant.

I have pleasure in again placing on record the indebtedness of the Department to wool-brokers, freezing companies, and others for their co-operation and willingness at all times to afford assistance.

I have, &c.,
ROBERT TRIGGS,
Controller.

The Right Hon. Minister in Charge,
Department of Imperial Government Supplies, Wellington.
