

SLAUGHTER OF STOCK.

The lambing season was a good one, and, the conditions continuing favourable for fattening, the slaughtering season opened early. While prices showed some tendency to fluctuate, they have nevertheless been maintained at a payable basis for the producer, but as by-products have not maintained the values of previous years it is doubtful if the returns on the whole will be sufficient to satisfy exporters. Sheep and lamb slaughterings have been heavier than last year, as have also calves and swine, all of which show substantial increases. Cattle-slaughterings have again decreased, owing to the low prices offering in the overseas market.

The following table shows the stock slaughtered at freezing establishments alone during the year, with the previous year's figures shown also :—

Stock.				Year ended 31st March, 1927.	Year ended 31st March, 1926.	Increase, 31st March, 1927.	Decrease, 31st March, 1927.
Cattle	..	..	..	163,268	206,904	..	43,636
Sheep	..	..	..	2,409,396	2,292,257	117,139	..
Lambs	..	..	..	5,343,766	5,055,245	288,521	..
Calves	..	..	..	57,791	31,358	26,433	..
Swine	..	..	..	201,766	159,852	41,914	..

For purposes of comparison the following table shows the killing of sheep and lambs over four periods—1st October to 31st March in each year—as indicative of the slaughterings from the beginning of each season to 31st March, the end of the year under review, but not the end of the season :—

Stock.				1923-24.	1924-25.	1925-26.	1926-27.
Sheep	..	..	..	1,462,128	1,821,901	1,654,489	1,729,963
Lambs	..	..	..	3,492,004	3,360,761	3,574,508	3,806,498

These figures show an increase of 75,474 sheep and 231,990 lambs for the period 1st October, 1926, to 31st March, 1927, compared with the same period of 1925-26.

The following are the numbers of each class of animal slaughtered under direct inspection during the year ended 31st March, 1927 :—

Cattle	..	..	..	..	..	..	321,039
Calves	..	..	..	..	..	..	100,486
Sheep	..	..	..	..	..	..	3,018,977
Lambs	..	..	..	..	..	..	5,470,710
Swine	..	..	..	..	..	..	379,577

The following table indicates the respective class of premises at which these animals were slaughtered :—

Stock.					Abattoirs.	Meat-export Slaughterhouses.	Bacon-factories.
Cattle	..	..	..	..	157,771	163,268	..
Calves	..	..	..	..	42,695	57,791	..
Sheep	..	..	..	..	609,581	2,409,396	..
Lambs	..	..	..	..	126,944	5,343,766	..
Swine	..	..	..	..	136,544	201,766	41,267

At ordinary slaughterhouses for the year ended 31st March, 1927, the stock slaughtered was as follows :—

Cattle	..	..	..	..	..	..	83,946
Calves	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,472
Sheep	..	..	..	..	..	..	238,409
Lambs	..	..	..	..	..	..	23,701
Swine	..	..	..	..	..	..	23,143

In addition, 38,739 carcasses of pork killed and dressed by farmers and sent into butchers' shops were examined by departmental officers.

In connection with the animals shown in the table as slaughtered at meat-export slaughterhouses, the following numbers of the respective classes are returned as having gone into consumption within the Dominion :—

Cattle	..	..	..	..	..	..	38,740
Calves	..	..	..	..	..	..	7,713
Sheep	..	..	..	..	..	..	152,343
Lambs	..	..	..	..	..	..	60,348
Swine	..	..	..	..	..	..	15,312