Inspection of Meat.

The number of sheep in the Dominion has shown a substantial increase each year, as shown by the following table :—

Year.	Stud and Flock Rams, Two-tooth and over.	Breeding-ewes.	Other Sheep.	Lambs.	Total.
1926	370,535	13,948,252	4,292,056	6,294,036	24,904,993
1927	388,274	14,831,730	3,906,665	6,522,347	25,649,016
1928	396,351	15,534,051	3,893,774	7,309,634	27,133,810

This increase in the sheep flocks has been reflected in a large increase in the number of lambs slaughtered, as indicated in the following table, showing the respective classes of stock slaughtered and subjected to inspection at freezing establishments and abattoirs throughout the Dominion during the past three seasons :—

Year.	Cattle.	Calves.	Sheep.	Lambs.	Swine.
Oct.–Sept.					
1925–26	344,485	108,429	2,865,549	5,216,836	361,981
1926–27	311,881	149,485	3,071,800	5,260,051	367,764
1927–28	382,605	355,499	2,927,773	6,165,088	449,765

The inspection of cattle in slaughter gives a valuable indication of the extent of tubercular infection among the cattle of the Dominion, and it is satisfactory that the records over a period of years show a downward tendency in the percentage affected, indicating that the method of control adopted by the Department is giving results in the desired direction.

The figures for the past three years show the percentage of all classes of cattle except calves affected in any degree to be—1925–26, 5·16 per cent. ; 1926–27, 5·08 per cent. ; 1927–28, 5·10 per cent. ; as compared with 6·87 per cent. for the year 1918–19.

Control of Rabbit Pest.

In connection with the administration of those repressive measures which are necessary in order to maintain our agricultural and pastoral industries on a sound footing, the control of the rabbit pest has been carried out strenuously and with a minimum of friction. Rabbits are now fewer and less troublesome than has been the case for many years past ; and although the good work of Rabbit Boards has been of material assistance in this, and the commercial value of rabbit-skins has been another important factor, the inspection service maintained must also be given its full measure of credit for the present extremely satisfactory position.

The Fruitgrowing and Horticultural Industries.

The Horticulture Division of the Department is carrying out tests of fruit-tree stocks, experimenting for the control of fruit-tree diseases, conducting manurial and cover-crop trials, and testing commercial sprays.

Successful work under the Department's advice is being carried out in New Zealand cool stores in preventing waste and controlling " flesh-collapse " disease of apples. In association with the Scientific and Industrial Research Department and the Low-temperature Research Station of Cambridge, England, investigations are also being made into the carriage of fruit overseas.

The Government guarantee on the export of apples and pears has been of great benefit in building up our present overseas fruit trade, amounting in the season of 1928 to over a million cases. Although the guarantee has now been so adjusted as to practically ensure the Government against loss, short of quite abnormal conditions prevailing in the overseas markets, it still remains of very great value in the financing of shipments.

Frost-fighting, Central Otago.—In the spring of 1926 practically the whole of the important stone-fruit crop of this district was destroyed by a late frost. The usual large apricot crop was a very special loss. This meant not only severe embarrassment to the growers, but a material loss of freight to the railways and others incidentally engaged. At the request of the local Fruit-growers' Association the Department imported special oil-burners and other apparatus, and demonstrated methods of frost-fighting in the spring of 1927. The practical work of frost-fighting was attended to by the local Orchard Instructor, while valuable technical co-operation was rendered by Dr. Kidson, Government Meteorologist, and others. The growers now have a good knowledge of the methods, costs, and possibilities of frost-prevention under their local conditions.