

could be adequately explained as due to purely seasonal conditions without incorporating any mysterious causes. In any case, the light condition of the wool helped to enhance its value. There was a fair amount of stain and water-rot in evidence, as was to be expected due to the wet season, and some wools exhibited a break, but as is always the case when prices are high there were no complaints from buyers. These high prices for the lower-quality and inferior wools are not an unmixed blessing, for they invariably deal a serious blow to any progressive movement for wool-improvement, and lead in some cases to a slipshod preparation of the clip for sale, a number of growers pressing their wool 'all-in'—*i.e.*, not even bothering to skirt or remove the bellies—in the erroneous belief that during a period of high prices such practices will pass unnoticed.

"When a farmer can get as much, or more, for his coarse, inferior, and often hairy wool as he can for his super lines, a state of affairs which happened quite frequently this last season, he sees no incentive to improve his wool, blissfully forgetting previous experience and what will inevitably happen again. There is no shadow of doubt that in the long-run it pays to grow good wool and get it up attractively for sale.

"I have during the past season done all that I could to drive this point home to farmers and young farmers' clubs by demonstrations, lantern lectures, and exhibits at shows. There is no doubt that the Dominion organization of young farmers' clubs is an excellent medium for the dissemination of knowledge, as the members are nearly always alert and unbiased and keen to make use of any new knowledge they receive.

"Correspondence on a large variety of subjects has been dealt with, including requests for reports on wool samples. During the year a number of special reports have been compiled, and a fair amount of data has also been collected on the subject of woolscouring in New Zealand. A complaint from Bradford regarding raddle-stained wool was investigated and the matter cleared up satisfactorily. While in Wellington I have attended meetings of the Wool Pack Committee of the New Zealand Standards Institute and of the Sheep Dip and Wool Scouring Committees."

RABBIT NUISANCE.

The destruction of rabbits has proceeded satisfactorily throughout the year, and, with the exception of some areas in the South Island, most districts are able to report a decrease in the incidence of this pest. Rabbit Boards continue to do excellent work in their respective districts, and a large area of country is now under the control of these Rabbit Boards, with the result that several parts of the Dominion are now practically free of rabbits.

For purposes of destruction strychnine is now being more generally used in combination with carrots, oats, or jam. Other methods are used as circumstances warrant—*viz.*, phosphorized pollard, cyanogas, trapping, and shooting.

The improved position as regards rabbits may be attributed to, firstly, the high prices ruling for skins and carcasses, secondly, the wet season in many localities resulting in the drowning of young rabbits; and, thirdly, the enthusiastic work of Rabbit Boards.

NOXIOUS WEEDS.

The eradication of noxious weeds continues to be a difficult problem. Owing to suitable climatic conditions ragwort in particular made strong growth during the past season. The control of this weed was taken in hand by a good number of County Councils, particularly in the North Island, under a scheme approved by the Government and largely assisted by subsidized labour made available by the Employment Division of the Department of Labour. The luxurious growth and spread of ragwort during recent years has caused considerable concern, and from experience it would seem that local administration by County Councils is the most promising method for effective control. In the course of their operations these bodies also attend to the clearing of the weed on unindividualized Native land and unoccupied Crown land in the district, and altogether the work carried out by these Councils and their officers is most commendable. In dealing with ragwort in the South Island the judicious grazing of sheep is practised.

Variegated thistle is still causing concern in east coast districts of the North Island, all classes of land being infested. In many parts good work has been done by landowners, but the large area of infested land makes eradication a serious problem.

Some fairly good work has been done with blackberry, gorse, and broom. Much of the clearing is done during the months of winter, when farmers have more time to give it attention. The flame-thrower is being more widely used and has proved effective in destroying heavy stands of these weeds.

In portions of the South Island sweet brier is still proving a difficult weed to control, but some satisfactory work has been done in the clearing of Californian thistle.

Some County Councils are now stocking weed-killer as a convenient source of supply for ratepayers.

STAFF.

Acknowledgment is made of the loyal service of the staff throughout an arduous year, also of the co-operation of those not actually attached to the Live-stock Division.