

WOOL

Last year the pre-war system of sale by auction was reverted to, and the large Government holdings of old wool, now known as "stock pile wool," are being included in the auctions under arrangements made by the Governments interested to avoid undue fluctuations in the market. The total stock pile wool holding shows a much greater rate of reduction than was originally expected. The world-wide demand for wool has been very strong and has resulted in extremely favourable prices to the growers. The demand appears likely to continue meantime, although as inventories in manufacturing countries become better balanced the present keenness in buying may be expected to abate. There has, however, been evident a reduction in the world production of wool, and any forecast of future prices would be futile.

Difficulties and delays with shipping and in the establishing of letters of credit, for which exchange permits from various overseas exchange-control authorities are required, still remain, but on the whole the business of wool selling and exporting is working smoothly and satisfactorily from the banking standpoint.

Our complete banking arrangements in New Zealand and London, and with overseas agents and connections, enable us to promptly and efficiently handle our proportion of the Dominion's wool business. A number of our customers have shipped their wool to the London market for sale, and increased quantities of wool are being handled by our Produce Department there.

AUSTRALIA

Our Australian business has been well maintained and demand for advances is strong. Our branches in Sydney and Melbourne give good service to our many New Zealand customers who do business with Australia or visit there.

The proposals of the Australian Government to nationalize the trading banks in Australia and take over all their assets are, of course, fully known to you, and the matter has been the subject of litigation which has been fully reported in the press. The hearing before the High Court in Australia was completed in April, the decision being reserved.

FIJI AND SAMOA

Our businesses at Suva and Apia have been more than maintained, and show increased activity, with both colonies receiving very favourable prices for their exports.

LONDON

Our business continues to be very active and the branch is well staffed and equipped to transact the increasing volume of business handled.

Recently we have been able to arrange for additional space in the building we occupy at No. 1 Queen Victoria Street, which will permit of our rearranging and bettering the facilities for customers, including visitors to England, and the staff.

SHAREHOLDING

The number of shareholders remaining on overseas registers at 31st March last was :—

	Ordinary Shares.	D.L.T.M. Shares.
London Register : 41 shareholders	.. 5,104	1,908
Australian Register : 4 shareholders	.. 859	62
	<hr/> 5,963	<hr/> 1,970