

provide the necessary accommodation. In all, additional storage for 1,350,000 freight carcasses has been provided, and this is already proving of very great value. A further arrangement for utilizing to the best advantage all available cold storage has been adopted. This consists of cutting into two portions all mutton and lamb carcasses, the cut being made slightly in front of the haunch-bone. After being thus divided the hinder portion is packed inside the chest-cavity, a neat and compact package resulting. As a result, a saving of approximately 25 per cent. of space has accrued, thus not only enabling the cold storage in the Dominion to be utilized to greater advantage, but also enabling a greater number of carcasses to be shipped on each steamer loading.

INSPECTION OF MEAT.

Difficulty was again experienced in maintaining the meat-inspection staff at sufficient strength to effectively carry out the work of the inspection of meat for local consumption and for export, but in spite of these difficulties the work has been carried out very satisfactorily.

The following are the numbers of each class of stock slaughtered under direct inspection during the year 1st April, 1917, to the 31st March, 1918: Cattle, 290,150; calves, 14,480; sheep, 3,417,582; lambs, 2,675,146; swine, 137,239. These figures show an increase in sheep of 75,672 when compared with the corresponding period of last year, but the other classes of stock show the following decreases: Cattle, 38,558; calves, 4,916; lambs, 736,475; swine, 16,205. These decreases have principally taken place in the South Island; but, as stated elsewhere, this decrease will no doubt be considerably, if not wholly, reduced before the end of the slaughtering season.

The following table indicates the destination of the dressed carcasses, those animals slaughtered at abattoirs being almost wholly for local consumption, and those slaughtered at meat-export slaughterhouses being (except in the case of swine) intended principally for export:

	At Abattoirs.	At Meat-export Slaughterhouses.	At Bacon-factories.
Cattle	78,831	211,319	..
Calves	11,364	3,116	..
Sheep	449,313	2,968,269	..
Lambs	66,012	2,609,134	..
Swine	40,806	36,708	59,725

At ordinary slaughterhouses the stock killed was as follows: Cattle, 51,150; calves, 816; sheep, 213,762; lambs, 20,297; swine, 15,297.

In addition, 27,004 carcasses of pigs were killed and dressed by farmers under the exemption clause of the Slaughtering and Inspection Act, and the dressed carcasses were inspected in butchers' shops and small bacon-factories.

IMPORTATION OF BREEDING-STOCK.

In spite of the war and the frequent difficulties connected with shipping, the importation of good breeding-stock has continued to some extent, the total number imported being as follows: Bulls, 14; heifers, 27; cows, 4; calf, 1; rams, 5; ewes, 12.

INSPECTION OF DAIRIES SUPPLYING MILK TO TOWNS.

This work has been carried on steadily during the year, and, in view of its importance from the standpoint of safeguarding human health, every effort has been made to keep it up to the best standard of efficiency possible under the circumstances. It is satisfactory to note that the structural and sanitary conditions of dairies is steadily improving. One great drawback, however, to the enforcement of better structural conditions on some dairy farms lies in the fact that the occupiers are only the lessees of the places, and not the owners; consequently considerable hardship is inflicted on a man who is compelled to go to extensive expenditure in new buildings, or in improvements to existing buildings, when nearing the end of his lease, with no certainty of being able to renew it. When a suitable time comes, the question of enacting legislation under which owners of such premises must bear their share of the cost of such improvements should be considered. Specimens of mixed milk from the herds supplying the principal centres with milk continue to be sent to the laboratory for special examination for the presence of tubercle bacilli or other injurious microbe organisms. These samples, generally speaking, have been found free from dangerous contamination.

PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES BY IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

The services of a number of the members of the staff of the division have been largely utilized in connection with the carrying-out of the arrangements made for the purchase of meat, wool, and hides for the Imperial Government. Early in 1917 the Hon. the Minister who, in the absence of the Prime Minister, was in charge of the purchase of Imperial supplies set up a committee to organize all the arrangements necessary for giving effect to the Imperial Government's request that wool and sheep-skins be purchased on its behalf, this committee also later making the necessary arrangements for the purchase of hides. This committee consisted of Messrs. W. G. Foster, W. D. Stewart, and myself; and for several months my time was very fully occupied with the work necessarily entailed. In addition, the services of the Inspectors at freezing-works were utilized for the purpose of certifying to shipments of slipe wool from the works, and to weights, &c., of hides purchased. These Inspectors also continued to carry out the supervision of meat-grading, and to furnish the necessary certificates in connection with meat-shipments. Altogether, the portion of the staff of the division engaged in these duties rendered a great deal of valuable service to the Government in connection with the purchases made on behalf of the Imperial Government, this work being done in addition to their ordinary duties.