

Character: Generally good. Wool grown in South Canterbury has shown a marked improvement in the past two seasons or so.

Oamaru, Dunedin, and Invercargill.—Evidence of a severe winter and shortage of feed owing to the failure of the turnip crop have had a very marked effect on the wool-clip in Dunedin, Oamaru, and Invercargill districts. Wools for the most part are poorly grown and very much shorter in staple. Also, a very marked feature is the fineness of the clip: what were usually 44/46's this year run out at 46/48's quality. Hoggets are poorly grown and very tender with few exceptions. A big proportion of last year's preparing-wool is only carding this season. It has also run finer in quality, and a large proportion is off colour and drabby in appearance.

The condition of the wool is lighter than in a normal year, being fluffy in character and badly grown. Sheep have produced a less weight of wool per head, the staple being finer and shorter and having a starved appearance. The above remarks apply particularly to farmers' lots, although some of the station wools also show these characteristics.

The character of the wool on a whole is poorer, but the fineness in quality will help growers to some extent, and the enhanced price will help to make up shortage in weight.

There is a much larger proportion of inferior wool than usual, and some growers' wool cheques will be much smaller than in previous years.

Strangely enough, the high-country clips are in better condition than last year, and this is accounted for by the previous year's severe snowstorms having killed a large number of high-country sheep, and this country has been greatly under-stocked during the past year. In many cases the merino wool is much superior to that of the past two or three seasons.

There is a noticeable absence of new seed in the clips offered up to the present date, but a large quantity of wool contains last year's seed. However, on the whole the wools are not quite so seedy as last year.

FREEZING COMPANIES' SLIPE WOOL.

Valuations of freezing companies' slipe wool have been continued through the present season. The following table indicates the extent of the Department's operations in this section from the inception of the requisition:—

				Payments to Date, £
<i>Purchased for valuation in the United Kingdom:—</i>				
Number of bales advanced against .. ..	..	..	68,880	2,013,123
Shipped to Great Britain .. ..	..	67,085		
Shipped on account of other Governments ..	..	1,795		
		68,880		
<i>Purchased under New Zealand valuations:—</i>				
Number of bales purchased .. ..	..	..	138,406	3,867,221
Shipped to Great Britain .. ..	..	80,789		
Shipped on account of other Governments ..	..	7,604		
Awaiting shipment .. ..	..	50,013		
		138,406		
Totals .. ..	..	..	207,286	£5,880,344

TERMINATION OF CONTRACTS.

The contracts for the purchase of New Zealand wool by the Imperial Government cover all wool clipped or pulled on or before the 30th June, 1920.

SHEEP-SKINS.

The purchase of sheep-skins has been continued on the same terms and conditions as in previous seasons. The skins have been allocated to fellmongers for treatment as hitherto, and the resulting wool and pelts have been delivered to the Government through their agents at the customary shipping-ports, branded and casked as directed. To the 31st March, 1920, the number of skins purchased and distributed to fellmongers was 6,380,501; value, £2,573,155. The requisition of this class of produce on behalf of the Imperial Government ceases in respect of sheep-skins from stock killed up to the 30th June, 1920.