

During the period of financial stringency preference has been given as far as possible to applications for loans from local bodies for the purpose of completing necessary public works. This policy will be continued.

The year's operations show a result appreciably lower than in any recent year. This is accounted for by two main factors—the increase in the salaries of the officers, and the granting of a higher rate of interest to the estates under administration. The bonus granted to officers led to an increase in the salary-list of £30,000, and the higher rate of interest granted to estates absorbed a further £45,000, so that provision had to be made for an additional sum of £75,000.

The reserve funds, consisting of investments in trustee securities, buildings, furniture, and equipment, now total £486,350—an amount which gives a feeling of security for the future. The Department is guaranteed by the State, but its success justifies the belief that the possibility of a call upon the Consolidated revenue is exceedingly remote.

The number of persons who deposit wills in the Office for safe custody continues to increase.

#### DEPARTMENT OF IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES.

During the year under review the purchase of wool, sheep-skins, frozen meat, cheese, and butter on behalf of the Imperial Government was terminated.

The requisition of frozen meat ceased in respect of meat killed after the 30th June, 1920. The shipments since the purchase commenced on the 3rd March, 1915, total 3,456,527 quarters beef, 17,342,177 carcasses mutton, and 17,667,803 carcasses lamb.

The wool requisition terminated with wool of the 1919–20 clip delivered into store up to the 30th September, 1920. The contract with freezing companies for the purchase of slipe wool applied only to wool produced by them up to the 30th June, 1920. The purchase of sheep-skins terminated with skins delivered into brokers' stores up to the same date.

The total purchases of greasy wool amounted to 2,086,951 bales. In addition 261,652 bales of slipe wool have been purchased from freezing companies. The number of sheep-skins purchased on behalf of the Imperial Government and fell-mongered in the Dominion totals 7,666,864.

The requisition of cheese on behalf of the Imperial Government ceased with deliveries into store to the 1st July, 1920, and the number of crates shipped under the requisition was 3,137,769.

A contract was completed between producers and the Imperial Government in respect of the 1920–21 season's butter delivered into grading-store up to the 31st March, 1921, and the total purchases made under this contract amounted to 1,202,717 boxes. The total shipments of butter since the commencement of the requisition up to the 31st March last amount to 2,897,481 boxes.

#### WOOL PROFITS.

An amount of £1,619,069 was made available by His Majesty's Imperial Government, representing this Dominion's share of profits to the 31st March, 1919, on sales of wool by the Imperial Government for civilian use. This has been distributed through woolbrokers by cheques made out to the order of individual growers.

#### BUTTER EQUALIZATION FUND.

The arrangement made by the New Zealand Government, under which manufacturers of butter for household use within New Zealand were subsidized so as to ensure supplies of creamery butter to Dominion consumers at a reasonable price and at the same time give to the manufacturers of such butter a price on a parity with that obtained for butter requisitioned by the Imperial Government, has been concluded.