

are some of our sheep-farmers who still ship their wool Home to be sold in London, and, as a case in point, 14,638 bales of greasy wool were shipped direct from Gisborne on consignment to the Home market. The following table shows the difference in price per bale between the 1926-27 selling season and the 1927-28 season :—

				1926-27.	1927-28.	Increase.
				£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Auckland	..	..	..	16 8 10	22 6 3	5 15 5
Napier	..	..	..	17 4 0½	23 9 1	6 5 0½
Wanganui	..	..	..	17 5 0½	23 12 4	6 7 3½
Wellington	..	..	..	18 8 5¾	24 10 5	6 1 11½
Christchurch	..	..	..	19 15 6½	25 0 7	5 5 0½
Timaru	..	..	..	19 9 0¾	26 1 5	6 12 4½
Dunedin	..	..	..	19 16 4½	26 6 10	6 10 6½
Invercargill	..	..	..	15 19 11½	21 7 0	5 7 0½

The following also shows the total money received by each centre where the wool was sold, from 14th November, 1927, to 31st March, 1928: Auckland, £1,045,586 1s. 3d.; Napier, £2,287,156 10s. 4d.; Wanganui, £1,331,602 2s. 8d.; Wellington, £2,672,255 17s. 11d.; Christchurch, £1,753,668 11s. 3d.; Timaru, £748,493 12s. 6d.; Dunedin, £1,972,016 3s. 10d.; Invercargill, £656,819 5s.

There was a satisfactory increase in the number of sheep in the Dominion last year, the return on 30th April, 1927, showing 25,649,016, an increase of 744,023 over the previous year. The number of breeding-ewes kept eclipsed all previous records, being 14,831,730, an increase over the previous year of 883,478. The dry ewes numbered 831,691, a decrease of 248,044 below the previous year. The number of stud and flock rams increased by 18,739.

Microscopic examination of rams' wool: Farmers take a keen interest in this work, and forward samples of wool for examination. In several cases where a ram has been adversely reported on the owner has followed the advice given and fattened him as a wether. The following breeds show the most faults in their wool: Lincoln, English Leicester, Border Leicester, and Romney Marsh.

Practical demonstrations have been given from time to time on live sheep, showing the points to aim for and the points to avoid; also practical demonstrations in the shearing-sheds on preparing wool for market. A large number of lantern lectures have been delivered with the aid of slides. These show very clearly the great difference between the various fibres grown by some sheep—i.e., pure wool, broken medullation, hairy wool, kemp, and dead fibres. All lectures and demonstrations have been well attended by the farmers.

I still carry out my system of working each district by utilizing the organization of the Farmers' Union to arrange the itinerary so that I can do as many places as possible on one trip. Farmers often transport me from place to place, which assists in keeping down travelling-expenditure. There has been a good demand for Bulletins Nos. 103 and 124.

The Department received twenty-four of the improved all-wool wool-bales manufactured by Mr. F. Aykroyd, of Bradford, England. These bales were tried out, and were not satisfactory, as the report I sent in clearly showed.

For the year to 30th April, 1927, an increase of 564 farmers were shown as owning sheep, the number on that date standing at 25,609.

The following table shows the different countries to which wool was shipped after being sold within the Dominion.

Country to which exported.	Greasy.		Scoured.		Slipd.		Washed.	
	Bales.	Value.	Bales.	Value.	Bales.	Value.	Bales.	Value.
		£		£		£		£
United Kingdom	398,920	9,158,744	41,246	1,032,706	68,514	1,460,623	1,278	26,858
Ceylon	2	46	..	..	..	..	..	..
South Africa Union	975	14,293	..	..	..	..	..	..
Canada	6,949	153,261	562	11,147	1,564	34,526	..	..
Australia	18,924	460,204	3,615	80,076	3,279	81,825	10	277
Belgium	5,856	127,170	..	..	95	2,680	..	..
Denmark	201	2,820	276	4,823	..	..	..	..
France	82,386	1,892,608	119	2,525	1,263	32,900	..	..
Germany	42,890	988,220	379	18,477	567	10,568	..	..
Italy	7,464	177,099	..	..	..	..	..	..
Netherlands	817	20,397	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sweden	23	500	..	..	..	..	..	..
Japan	15,949	386,883	..	..	15	255	..	..
United States	16,845	437,044	149	4,512	2,585	467,321	..	..
Totals	598,201	13,819,289	46,346	1,154,266	77,882	1,690,698	1,288	27,135

The grand total of bales is 723,717, and value of wool £16,691,388. The wool purchased by Dominion woollen-mills at sales amounted to 6,275,989 lb., valued at £470,698.

RABBIT NUISANCE.

The improvement in the state of the rabbit pest recorded last year has been more than sustained, and the rabbit population to-day is considerably reduced. This refers particularly to areas which were previously known to be badly infested. In some areas in the Auckland District where the season was favourable to an increase rabbits began to show up where previously their presence, although known, had not shown any tendency to increase, and energetic measures had to be taken. To maintain the position now attained constant vigilance will be necessary both by the settlers and the Inspectors, as any slackening will quickly be reflected in increased numbers of the pest and the position be lost.

Strychnine to the amount of 11,718 oz. was sold during the year, being a decrease of 2,090 oz.

To Rabbit Boards a full measure of credit for the improved position is due. The Boards constituted have, almost without exception, justified their existence, and the manner in which they have approached the matter and co-operated with the Department has been an inspiration, and deserves the recognition of the Department and the country as a whole. Increased production would have been an impossible task to have attempted in some districts without an energetic campaign against the rabbit, and the increased sheep now carried is evidence of the success attained. The total amount in subsidies paid out to Boards during the year under the provisions of the Act was £15,300.