

INSPECTION OF MEAT FOR EXPORT.

This important responsibility of the Live-stock Division has been well carried out, only a very few cases having occurred wherein any complaint has been received from overseas countries where our meat is marketed. The Chief Inspector of the Smithfield Market, London, visited the Dominion during the year and personally inspected the work being done at the various meat-export slaughter-houses and abattoirs, expressing appreciation of it generally. He made some suggestions as to certain points of detail, and these are being gone into by correspondence through the medium of the High Commissioner.

An important feature of the meat-export trade during the year lies in the action taken by the British authorities regarding the disease of sheep known as lymph-adenitis. A large number of imported mutton and lamb carcasses from various sources were examined, and as a result restrictions in the form of special inspection in the United Kingdom were imposed upon imports from certain countries. The number of New Zealand carcasses found affected was so small that no action of this kind was taken at the time in connection with our meat. The disease is present here to a relatively small extent, and special precautions in the form of more thorough inspection than usual at the time of slaughter were taken to detect any affected carcasses and prevent their shipment. In addition, information and advice has been freely disseminated among sheep-farmers to enable them to be fully acquainted with the methods necessary for preventing their sheep becoming infected. The characteristic feature of the disease is the formation of abscesses in lymphatic glands. It does not affect the general health of the animals.

The trade in boneless veal has necessitated an extension of meat-inspection work. This has proceeded satisfactorily, thanks to a large extent to the manner in which those engaged in the trade have done their best to assist in meeting the requirements of the Department.

WOOL.

Quite a good wool season was experienced, as will be gathered from the report of the Live-stock Division, in which extracts from the sub-report of the Wool Instructor give details.

A considerable amount of attention has been given to the complaints made in Bradford regarding faults in Romney and Romney-cross wool, and in conjunction with the Research Department and the Massey Agricultural College authorities definite research work into this question has been undertaken at Massey College. The Department has naturally interested itself specially in this matter, and is co-operating with advisory and other work in the field. It is hoped that this may be further extended.

THE POULTRY INDUSTRY.

As will be gathered from the report of the Director of Live-stock and that of the Chief Poultry Instructor, this industry is passing through a difficult phase both as regards marketing conditions and the cost of egg-production in the North Island. It is hoped that the earnest endeavours which are being made to bring about improvement will be successful.

In order to assist the industry by providing an outlet for surplus eggs the Government, through the Department, gave a guarantee on export, the rate being based upon market values in London during the previous year. Unfortunately, owing to causes beyond our control, market values during the season were markedly lower than of late years, and the guarantee had to be called upon to the extent of £5,839. The quality of the eggs shipped was good, and a good reputation for New Zealand eggs has been established in the British market. For the coming season it is hoped that a further guarantee will be given, even if it be on a lower basis of value.

THE PIG INDUSTRY.

Pig-keeping has made some progress, but this has been restricted in the North Island by the cost of foods supplementary to dairy-farm by-products. This question of foodstuffs has become, in fact, more or less of a limiting factor in that portion of New Zealand, and a good deal of thought and of experimental work has been given to the question of how to meet it. There is room for much improvement in the methods of housing and feeding pigs in dairying districts, and a good deal of loss is experienced through sickness and death among young animals as a result of bad methods. The field officers of the Live-stock Division and the special Instructor do their best to aid farmers by advice regarding improved methods. The bonus on export pork has been continued. Many farmers think that this does not operate with full benefit to them, but owing to the nature of the trade it is difficult to see how any other method of payment would be workable in actual practice, seeing that with bacon pigs in particular their ultimate destination, whether for home consumption or for export, cannot be determined at the time of purchase from the grower.