

- (2) The unavoidable deterioration of the pastures on the poorer types of soil formation and the breeding policies often adopted in endeavours to counteract the consequent falling-off in the weights and grades of the clips.
- (3) The fat-lamb industry and the relative values of meat and wool which tend to concentrate attention on body conformation at the expense of wool.
- (4) A lack of appreciation of the finer points of breeding for wool.

In 1929 the Empire Marketing Board financed a visit to New Zealand of Dr. Nichols to discuss and report on methods of wool-improvement in the Dominion. Extracts from his report are as follows :—

It would seem that an educational system whereby the growers could have access to the latest information on scientific work conducted in other wool-producing countries should be established. There is a general feeling that rapid improvements could be made in the general standard of the clip if the defects in stock, preparation of wool, &c., could be pointed out to the breeders as a community ; this would involve, for early results, the instruction, preferably by demonstration, of the present generation of breeders. The question of the personnel of such a system is difficult. It is recognized that further information can only be obtained by further careful research, and it is suggested that both services would be handicapped if the research workers were called upon to conduct extensive lecture campaigns and demonstrations.

The establishment of a control institution of similar constitution to that of the Dairy Research Institution is contemplated, it being desirable that research on sheep-breeding should not be allied to or obscured in relation with educational institutions or programmes, and should be conducted in an organization with independent control of its experimental material. Such an organization would serve for co-ordination of effort as the depository of information, with definite powers of co-operation with bodies such as the British Research Association, and as the advisory nucleus in educational campaign.

Following on this report, the Research Department arranged to send Mr. D. J. Sidey, of Lincoln College, Home for a year to Leeds ; also 120 fleeces were collected from typical good breeders for information as to manufacturing uses. An extract from the report on the examination of these fleeces is as follows :—

Probably one of the most pleasing features of the examination from the point of view of the New Zealand wool-producer was that although some of the Romney and Corriedale wools showed marked irregularity of size and shape of the fibres others show a fairly high degree of regularity. It is evident, therefore, that by a careful selection within the breeds for fibre regularity, made possible by modern research methods, it should be possible to improve existing flocks to produce a type of wool that would be most acceptable to the manufacturer.

In 1930 the Imperial Wool Research Conference was held, at which the Secretary of the Research Department and Mr. D. J. Sidey both attended. Some of the recommendations of the Conference were as follows :—

1. The Imperial Wool Research Conference desires to direct the attention of the Imperial Conference to the paramount importance of continuing and intensifying scientific investigation into problems of wool-production in the principal wool-producing countries of the Empire.

2. The Conference desires to stress the importance of the closest co-operation between the Wool Industries Research Association and authorities concerned with investigations into problems of wool-production throughout the Empire.

3. In addition to the fundamental work which is being carried out at Torridon on the wool-fibre, the Wool Industries Research Association is asked to undertake responsibility for carrying out commercial trials and making technical reports on samples of wool submitted by the appropriate authorities. In this connection it has been agreed that representatives of the wool-producing countries of the Empire should be invited to serve on the Wool Fibre Committee of the Association.

The Imperial Conference of 1930 reviewed these recommendations and its Economic Committee also commented as follows :—

The Committee heartily endorse the proposals made that an economic survey of the marketing and utilization of Empire wools should be undertaken, and desire to support the suggestion that the terms of reference of the Imperial Economic Committee should be widened to enable such an inquiry to be made by that body on the basis indicated. Further, in view of the possible present overproduction of wool in relation to existing avenues of utilization, the Committee recommend that the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research of the United Kingdom, or other appropriate body, be asked to investigate the possibilities of other methods of utilization.

This report was referred by the Imperial Conference for the consideration of the several Governments of the British Commonwealth.