

and Western Coastal belt. Town milk-supply and fattening stock for the metropolitan markets are prominent features in these two counties in which the number of breeding-ewes is less than half the breeding-ewes in Raglan.

(c) *The Waikato and Hauraki Plains* (Waikato, Waipa, Otorohanga, Piako, Matamata, and Hauraki Plains Counties)

The number of sheep has increased by 1,210,000 since 1925, and of these 790,000 are breeding-ewes. Most of this remarkable increase is recorded after 1935, and from that year dairy-cow numbers changed very little. Improved carrying-capacity through the use of top-dressing (illustrated in Fig. 1), the development of second-class scrub country, the necessity to run sheep because of the ragwort menace on dairy-farms, and the use of cobalt in bush-sick areas are the principal reasons for the increase in sheep. Southdown rams are used on most of the additional ewes, but the use of the Romney ram has gained popularity recently for fat-lamb production. There are a few farmers who have changed from dairy cows to sheep in recent years, but this accounts for only a fraction of the gain in sheep. Dairy-farmers are holding their cow numbers to the limit of existing labour and facilities and are taking up increased carrying-capacity with breeding ewes for fat-lamb production. At present more than three-quarters of the annual requirements for breeding-ewes for the Waikato come from outside the area, mainly from the East Coast districts and also from the King-country. With the improvement of pastures to the present high quality, the proportion of run cattle to sheep has declined steadily, and wethers have also declined for the same reason, reaching low levels by 1935.

(d) *Cape Colville* (Great Barrier, Coromandel, Thames, and Ohinemuri Counties)

Since 1925 the number of sheep increased by 57,000, and of these 33,000 are breeding-ewes. There is very little flat land in Barrier and Coromandel Counties, and these contain two-thirds of the sheep in the region, which are devoted almost exclusively to wool and store-sheep production. In these counties sheep numbers have remained about the same since 1930, though the quality of the stock is tending to decline. The soil is poor with little exception and the country steep, and farmers rely on the annual burning of danthonia to hold the pastures and check fern and scrub invasion. This is in part an alternative to running beef cattle, since it is difficult to winter cattle on only poor hill danthonia. In many cases there is a continued deterioration of fertility which is leading to ultimate reversion with little hope of revival, it being apparent that liming and top-dressing are unlikely to be payable. Dairying is increasing as settlers confine their operations to more workable country. Sheep in Thames and Ohinemuri Counties are associated with dairy-farming to a large extent, and dairying is the predominant interest. The highland part of the region has a small surplus of breeding-ewes and wethers, which is absorbed by the adjacent Waikato areas. Rather less than half the ewes in Thames and Ohinemuri are Southdown mated for fat-lamb production.

(e) *The Central Plateau* (Tauranga, Whakatane, Rotorua, and Taupo Counties)

The increase in the number of sheep in this region since 1925 was 314,000, including 215,000 ewes. Except for a limited area where the Tarawera and Ngaruahoe ash showers fell, the region is bush sick and sheep-farming was