

It may be interesting to New-Zealanders to know the conditions under which men may start pastoral farming. I now speak of people with a small capital. The landowner, as a rule, provides a house, pens, and the necessary fittings, and camp land sufficient to carry stock and 800 sheep. The shepherd or estanciero buys a further 800 sheep. He takes charge of the whole flock and provides his own food, mutton excepted, which is to be taken from the flock. Whatever the profit from the flock may be it is divided equally between the landowner and the shepherd, after deducting the shearing and dipping expenses, which are advanced by the landowner. The shepherd or farmer is allowed to plant vegetables required for his family, also to keep poultry, milch-cows, bees, &c., and he can also plant fruit-trees. Contracts of this kind are generally entered into for a term of three years. At the end of each year the produce of wool, wethers, sheep, and skins sold is divided. The increase is divided at the end of the contract, when the shepherd may either take his share or capital in sheep, or renew his contract. The necessary capital for such a plan as this is very small: 800 sheep at \$1, \$800; six horses at \$15, \$90; furniture, utensils, and general expenses for first year, \$250: total, \$1,140. With this capital, and with sheep shearing  $5\frac{1}{2}$  lb. to 6 lb. of wool, the shepherd's portion of the profit may be estimated at from \$450 to \$550, without counting what he could make from butter, cheese, poultry, honey, &c.

The State lands which are available for sale or for renting, as given by the 1903 Year-book, number nearly a hundred million hectares, situated as follows: In Santa Cruz, 24,949,976 hectares; Chubut, 22,545,742 hectares; Rio Negro, 15,087,470 hectares; Chaco, 13,025,450 hectares; Neuquen, 6,174,158 hectares; Formosa, 8,676,180 hectares; Pampa, 3,124,802 hectares; Tierra del Fuego, 1,886,809 hectares; Misiones, 792,000 hectares: total, 96,262,487 hectares.

Seventy-five per cent. of the wool in the Argentine is of white-faced long-wool sheep (Lincolns and Leicesters), 20 per cent. of merinos, and only about 5 per cent. of black-faced and criollo sheep.

In 1901 228,358 tons of wool was exported, and in 1902, 197,936 tons. In 1903, 192,989 tons was exported, most of which went to France and Germany. I have seen a great many fine flocks of sheep in the Argentine, and some of the breeders pay extraordinary prices for stud stock at Home; notwithstanding this, and the fact also that they have such an excellent climate for the breeding of animals, their sheep on the whole, in my opinion, do not compare with best New Zealand and Australian sheep. You will, however, find some of the best stud stock that is to be found in any part of the world. Owing to the fact that my stay was such a short one in the republic, it was impossible for me to collect much practical information direct from the sheep-farmers—that is, with reference to the actual methods of handling sheep on the estancias.

#### AGRICULTURE, STOCK, AND GENERAL.

When one travels over a portion of the Argentine, a country only one-third the size of the United States, he sees its immense plains formed by Nature, with a climate perhaps the most comfortable and salubrious in the world taking it the year round. It is a country also where railways find no natural obstacles in the way of their construction. You find on the Pacific Railway plains the great estancias (ranches) covered with fat steers and sheep. The latter, I may say, are to be seen in millions. Amongst the cattle I can safely say thousands are of the best breeds. You also see the great fields of linseed, corn (maize), and wheat, the principal agricultural products of the country.

The size of an estancia, or what we would call a "run" in New Zealand or a "ranch" in the United States, varies from 3,000 to 600,000 acres. About 20,000 acres might be said to be an average estancia. In conducting the business of cattle-herding or ranching in the Argentine, that is where cattle are raised and fattened for export, it requires expert men. These men in the Argentine are called Gauchos. They are, so far as riding and the care of cattle is concerned, similar to our cowboys in the North-west Territories of Canada, where they can lasso or tie up a wild steer or horse in lightning style without getting out of the saddle. The horses, generally speaking, are small-sized, but wiry and of marvellous endurance. They somewhat resemble our Canadian mustang horse. The cattle roam over the great plains, and many of the estancias are not fenced. It is therefore necessary to brand the cattle. They have an exhaustive set of branding regulations, which time and space would not permit of my detailing in this report.

In my opinion the republic is favoured with a combination of advantages over many other, or, perhaps, over almost any country in the world. I am still further of the opinion that if the Argentine agricultural and pastoral industries were developed on anything like up-to-date lines, within very few years they would be able to land their products on the markets of the world almost beyond competition. People may ask, Why? I say then that the above statements may be backed up by the following: First of all, perhaps, the success and future progress of the Argentine, so far as agriculture is concerned, may be credited to her geographical position or situation, and also to her favourable climatic conditions. Then there is the marvellously low price of land, and the fact of her being able to make use of labour on the land the year round. Next is the growing of alfalfa, of which four to six crops are often cut, the latter in the best districts. The Argentine also has the advantage of having cheaper labour than such great producing countries as Canada, United States, Australia, and New Zealand. It has, further, the advantage of breeding and the carrying of cattle for dairying purposes, and also of fattening its live-stock the year round with little or no extra feed. It has also the advantage of having lower ocean rates to the principal markets of the world than Australia and New Zealand, and only about 25 per cent. higher than North America. The Argentine also has the advantage of having a limited mileage of railway, which enables her to land her products at the ports of shipment at a very low cost. Then, again, severe droughts are almost unknown in the Argentine, and the pests which we hear so much of in our colonies, which it is claimed do so much damage to crops and pastures (such as the locusts), are, in my opinion, not nearly so bad as they are made out to be, and there is