

staff upon the regular work of examining specimens for officers of the Department and for stock-owners, with the result that no cessation or disturbance of this portion of the working routine has taken place.

The pastoral land attached to the Laboratory has proved valuable for the accommodation of horses belonging to the Defence Department which were suffering from contagious diseases (strangles and ringworm), or from serious sickness or injury. The location of the place, within easy reach of Trentham Camp and the remount depot, rendered it very useful for equine-hospital purposes.

A portion of the farm was set apart for the purposes of a series of manurial top-dressing experiments conducted by Mr. Aston, Departmental Chemist, and these are still in progress.

The ordinary pastoral farming operations have had to be somewhat curtailed owing to much of the grazing being utilized for horses, but what was done was satisfactory from a financial standpoint, thanks to the high values ruling for wool and meat, combined with the untiring and conscientious work of the Farm Overseer.

#### QUARANTINE STATIONS AND QUARANTINE OF LIVE-STOCK.

New quarantine regulations, under the Stock Act, 1908, for the prevention of the introduction into New Zealand of diseases affecting stock, were gazetted and brought into operation on the 4th October last. Copies of these regulations have been distributed to shipping and trading companies, and others interested in the importation of stock, and the new regulations appear to have been appreciated by all concerned. Since the embargo on foot-and-mouth disease has been modified the importations of purebred stock from Great Britain have been considerable, and the quality of the stock generally has been of a high order.

Interned prisoners of war are still being accommodated at Motuihi Island, Auckland, and Somes Island, Wellington, but there has been no serious inconvenience caused in consequence. At Quail Island, Lyttelton, a very necessary improvement is being carried out—namely, a new rain-catchment and tank system of water-supply. This is being installed by the Department of Public Works.

#### IMPORTATION OF ANIMAL MANURES.

The supplies of animal manures from India have increased considerably, while from the Commonwealth of Australia there is a slight decrease, probably due to a shortage of freight. Taking war conditions into consideration, we have been fortunate in having our supplies of animal manures kept up regularly. As regards inspection, the new arrangements in connection with the inspection of manure-sterilizing in India have continued to work in a satisfactory manner, and in the Commonwealth the inspection has also been thoroughly satisfactory.

#### POULTRY.

The industry as a whole continued to suffer more or less from the high prices of poultry-food, owing to the war. The exceptionally heavy culling-out of unprofitable stock that has taken place, together with the reduced number of chickens reared during the past season, has given the industry a severe test. At one period it was practically threatened with disaster. Poultry-keepers are to be congratulated on the present position of the industry and the manner in which they fought against the trying hard times. These adverse conditions have unfortunately had the effect of compelling many poultrymen to give up business. This was especially noticeable where the management was conducted on wrong lines and the class of stock kept unsatisfactory. On the other hand, properly conducted plants with the right class of stock secured a good margin of profit, this indicating that poultry-keeping when properly managed, even under the above conditions, is a profitable undertaking.

Now that food-values have declined and better prices are ruling for eggs and table-birds, those poultrymen who did not curtail their hatching operations last season will reap a good reward for their labours. Notwithstanding the improved present outlook for the industry it is generally realized by the public that the poultrymen of New Zealand will not be in a position to increase their output and so reduce market prices until they have at least another breeding season's increase to work on. So long as high prices rule for eggs heavy importations will have to be made to satisfy the local demand. This should bring home to the poultrymen the necessity for producing more eggs and preserving the summer surplus for winter use, thus regulating the supplies throughout the year and enabling the disposal of them at a reasonable cost to the consumer.

The effect of the abnormal conditions that have prevailed may yet prove to be not an unmixed evil. It has directed attention in a striking manner to the important work of culling and to the necessity of keeping only good stock under proper management. It has also enforced investigations in regard to feeding for egg-production. Previously it was commonly believed that the inclusion of wheat in the ration of the heavy layer was imperative. Owing to the scarcity and the excessive high prices ruling for this favoured grain, the Department is carrying out feeding-tests at the Milton Poultry-station with the object of demonstrating what results can be obtained from fowls fed on a dietary from which wheat is eliminated.\*

\* The results of this test for fifty-two weeks ended 28th April, 1916, appeared in the Department's *Journal* for May, 1916.