

I append the report of the Chief Poultry Instructor (Mr. F. C. Brown), as follows:—

In reviewing the economic condition of the poultry industry for the past year it has to be considered that from the point of view of producers the season's operations have not been highly remunerative, and this state of affairs is due chiefly to the low prices ruling for eggs during the spring and summer months. Although 7,952 cases containing thirty dozen eggs each, together with 20,000 lb. of egg-pulp, were exported to the London market during the flush season, under Government guarantee, the export of this surplus over and above local requirements did not have the effect of raising the price of eggs to a really paying point to the producer. The position as disclosed shows the necessity for better organization amongst producers in the disposal of their eggs. For example, the Government guarantee for large-sized eggs (2 oz. and over) returned to the producer from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 4d. per dozen net, whereas at the same time in many parts of the Dominion for eggs of similar quality producers were receiving in the region of 1s. to 1s. 1d. per dozen, and even less, on the local market. While the producer suffered, the consuming public reaped a benefit in being able to secure eggs at a low price, which in many cases was below the cost of production.

That egg-pulp is a big factor in connection with the marketing side of the industry is borne out by the fact that on the 31st December, 1928, various freezing-works in the Dominion were holding 423 tons of this commodity, equal to about 23,721 cases of eggs of thirty dozen each, and 312 tons on the corresponding date in 1929, representing about 17,469 cases of thirty dozen eggs in shell.

New Zealand has gained a particularly good name for eggs exported to the London market, but it is to be regretted that the price now obtainable in London does not allow a reasonable margin of profit for the New Zealand poultry-farmer. The 7,952 cases exported last year under Government guarantee will probably fall short of a profitable return by about 10s. per case. Account sales to hand again indicate the fallacy of exporting small eggs, for in the case of one shipper's return there was a difference in price of 9s. a case—*i.e.*, practically the cost of freight—between the maximum and minimum-sized eggs shipped.

In looking to the future prospect of the industry, taking into consideration the lower price for eggs in London compared with previous years, and considering, too, the present high cost of wheat (the recognized staple grain food for poultry), the prospect of exporting eggs to the overseas market at payable prices is by no means encouraging. In summarizing thus the present crisis it should not be inferred from my remarks that the poultry industry is not capable of further expansion. The local market, which is at least one of the best in the world for eggs and for table poultry, is very badly catered for, and as a result the demand by local consumers is by no means what it should be. The difference between the amount received by the producer and the price paid by the consumer, particularly in regard to table poultry, is far too great; while another weakness in connection with the marketing side of the industry is the difference between the summer and the winter prices of eggs. During the former period it is common for fresh eggs to be retailed at about 1s. 2d. per dozen or even lower, whereas during winter they realize up to 3s. per dozen. As a means of levelling up market prices whereby a more uniform price would be maintained throughout the year, the cool storage of the summer surplus should be availed of to a much greater extent than it is at the present time.

During the year a small consignment of eggs—*viz.*, 500 cases—was sent from Canada to the Auckland market under the cool-storage process. These, I understand, realized profitable returns. No doubt the extension of the cool-storage system in this country would tend to check such importations.

With regard to the local marketing of eggs, it is pleasing to report that a keener interest is now being taken by those concerned in the industry to raise the standard of eggs. An endeavour is being made—and rightly so—to have eggs sold according to their quality and weight. Indeed, in some quarters they are already being disposed of under these conditions. In this connection, however, it is questionable whether any system of grading will give permanent satisfaction unless it is adopted in the chief marketing centres under Government regulations.

The Wallaceville Poultry Station now possesses a flock of high-class laying fowls and ducks, while the demand on this plant for sittings of eggs and stock for breeding purposes showed a considerable increase during the past year. This farm is serving a valuable purpose, in that it enables the instructional staff to acquire first-hand knowledge as a result of practical investigation of the various details connected with poultry work. In co-operation with the officers attached to the Veterinary Laboratory much investigation work on diseases and parasitic life which affect poultry has been carried out, and in order that this branch of the work may be extended arrangements are in train for one of the Poultry Instructors to take charge of the Station.

A large amount of practical instructional work was carried out among poultry-keepers during the year, and many other services were rendered to the industry.

#### WOOL.

The wool-sales season did not open up at all promisingly, and as the season advanced prices still further declined, with the result that passings became frequent, and large quantities of wool were not sent to the sales and are still held in the Dominion in the hope of better prospects materializing. The total quantity thus held over in the Dominion has been estimated at from 140,000 to 150,000 bales.

The following extracts are taken from the report of Mr. J. G. Cook, Wool Instructor:—

Sheep throughout the Dominion commenced the winter of 1929 in good condition, and the weather conditions experienced during this period were varied with spells of very broken weather, also during the spring and early summer months, thus delaying shearing operations for the 1929-30 season. The bulk of the wool did not open up very clean, and a large percentage of it was tender when compared with the quality of that of previous years. At the opening of the first wool-sale, held in Wellington on the 14th November, 1929, there was a full attendance of buyers, and pieces and belly-wool were in keen demand by a number of French buyers, which demand was maintained at each following sale. Prices for wool at the first sale were fair, but at later sales prices declined rapidly, with the result that a large number of farmers withdrew their wool from sale, and a considerable number are still holding their wool in their sheds. The bulk of the wool sold was shipped to the United Kingdom, but France, Germany, Australia, United States, Belgium, and Japan all took fair quantities. The woollen-mills operating in the Dominion were able to secure wool suitable for their purposes, while Dominion wool-sourers were more to the fore in their purchases than has been the case for some years past.