

1933.
NEW ZEALAND.

WOOL-IMPROVEMENT IN THE DOMINION

(REPORT ON).

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER (RIGHT HON. G. W. FORBES).

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

THE catastrophic fall in prices of our agricultural exports during the past five years has caused widespread distress in the Dominion. In no product, however, has the fall been so pronounced as in wool. For four successive seasons Dominion woolgrowers have been forced to market their production under extremely unfavourable market conditions, the return received being well under the cost of production. Under these conditions there must be a serious danger of deterioration, and the Government is seriously concerned at the prices realized, particularly for crossbred wool. While New Zealand hopes and expects the future to bring forth a better day for the sheep-farming business and a higher standard of living for rural people, yet the promptness with which this hope and expectation will be realized will be determined by the constructive influences at work, particularly those within the industry itself.

The following tables are taken from Dalgety's *Wool Circular*, 1933-34 :—

WOOLS MARKETED IN THE DOMINION.

				Number of Bales sold.	Average per Pound. d.	Gross Value. £
1928-29	..	..	..	575,632	14·88	12,217,382
1929-30	..	..	..	425,902	8·55	5,130,897
1930-31	..	..	..	445,196	5·67	3,558,587
1931-32	..	..	..	475,135	5·26	3,571,776
1932-33	..	..	..	576,224	5·16	4,327,692

The vicissitudes of the pastoral industry are strikingly exemplified by a study of the above table, which reveals a descent within five years from the pinnacle of prosperity to the lowest level of modern times. It is probably unkind to go further back and refer to the boom year of 1924-25, when the Dominion clip averaged £29 5s. per bale and 20·21d. per pound.

Comparison of the North and South Island sales is as under :—

				North Island.	South Island.
1932-33.					
Bales sold	..	..	..	315,080	261,144
Average per bale	..	..	..	£6 6s. 9d.	£8 18s. 6d.
Average per pound	..	..	..	4·21d.	6·36d.
Weight per bale	..	..	..	361 lb.	337 lb.

The North Island average of 4·21d. per pound is the lowest in the history of Dominion auction sales since 1900-1.

The price-difference between the ordinary crossbred wool of the North Island and the half-bred, or Corriedale, wool of the South Island is far greater than the relative figures given above owing to the large amount of crossbred wool grown in the South Island and included in the above average figure. The total amount of "Merino" plus "half-bred" plus "Corriedale" wool in the South Island is approximately 30 per cent. of the total, and in the North Island about 1 per cent.

The growing, handling, and marketing of wool is admittedly a very complex problem, the reason for this being the great variation which occurs in diameter, length of fibre, grease content, &c., not only in different fleeces but within the same fleece. Unlike many of our other primary products, wool does not lend itself to simple standardization which would form a suitable basis of marketing,