

the process would be carried out successfully both from the point of view of the satisfactoriness of the sorting and the technical control of the scouring operation so as not to influence the working qualities of the wool. It is probable that "woollen" manufacturers are not so exacting in their requirements in these regards as the "worsted" manufacturers, and that what applies to the fine wools may not hold to the same extent for the stronger crossbred wools. It seems desirable that before the proposed practice is adopted in any locality a careful study should be made of the availability of sufficient supplies of suitable wool for scouring, and the possibility of marketing the scoured wool to advantage. To obtain the best returns, wool must obviously be kept in a condition suitable for the requirements of the purchaser. There appears to be some evidence, however, that the export of scoured wool is likely to increase.

Export of Tops.

The further suggestion has been made that the manufacturing of "tops"* for export be undertaken in the Dominion, this having been successfully accomplished in Australia. Support to a certain extent is given to this and the previous suggestion regarding sorted wool and matchings and better classing of wool by a study of the amounts of New Zealand wool re-exported from Great Britain after having been thus treated. Moreover, there are many localities in New Zealand in which the conditions of humidity and availability of soft water are suitable.

RE-EXPORTS OF ARGENTINE AND NEW ZEALAND RAW WOOL FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM, EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE GROSS IMPORTS FROM THESE COUNTRIES.

Source of Supply.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.	1930.	1931.	1932.
Argentina	20	12	19	8	4	3	†
New Zealand	30	32	37	43	40	31	†

The difficulties to be overcome are both technical and marketing. Tops with the same counts have variations in quality of an intricate nature to suit various users. Many years of practice have given Bradford pre-eminence in the manufacturing of tops. We may quote from "Wool Quality" by S. G. Barker, pages 32 and 33.

Very few wool tops are made from one type of wool. It is essential, from a particular spinner's point of view, to produce yarn of certain uniform characteristics, and in order to secure a top which will do this it is obvious that blending must be done in order to allow for the many differences in the wool coming from the same sources at different times, resulting from different local conditions of production. The topmaker, therefore, must maintain a constant standard of quality, without which continuity of supplies of popular yarns and fabrics would be impossible. It is obvious that the same components are not always available for the standard blending, and it is then that the topmaker must exercise his skill in order to produce a top equal in all working and finishing properties to the standard of previous deliveries, although the actual constituents of the blend may be varied. Efficient sorting permits efficient blending, the sorted qualities are the elements, whilst the blend is the acceptable compound.

Since, as already mentioned, wool sorting and blending permit the production of variety in yarns, it is obvious that in obedience to the dictates of fashion or the quest for something different, there will be, even within a quality, variation of constituents of particular blends. Thus we find a tendency to-day to get away from the old nomenclature or appellations of quality numbers, and to substitute in their places designations of different types of blends. It is thus possible, within a quality, to have several different yet representative types, each with particular characteristics suitable to particular branches of the trade.

It is obvious that such a state of affairs makes the standardization of wool quality an extremely complex and difficult matter. **Nevertheless, the question of exporting scoured wool or tops is well worthy of thorough exploration.** Standard prices for crossbred tops rule on the world's markets, and it appears probable that the spinner could blend different tops to secure his desired results in the yarn. **If it were possible to establish this industry more employment would ensue in the Dominion,** and a more direct guide given to the producer in the improvement of quality.

* Tops consist of a continuous band of combed fibres in an untwisted condition. The topmaker first sorts the fleeces into "matchings" by putting together those portions of different fleeces which correspond in "quality." They are then blended, scoured and carded, &c.

† Not yet available.