

POULTRY INDUSTRY.

During the 1933 session the Poultry-runs Registration Bill, which had been before Parliament in 1932, became law, and is now in operation. The Act provides for administration by a Board of six, comprising four producer representatives and two representing the Government, and this Board, having been set up, is now functioning. The principal objective is the organization of the industry in its own interests, and it is hoped that the weakness which has for long been felt in this industry will now be replaced by a strong organization working in the interests of producer and consumer. There are possibilities of further development of the poultry industry both in respect to increased local consumption and to export, the latter being a necessary concomitant to the former, as any development along the lines of increased internal consumption throughout the year must necessarily create a surplus during the season of heaviest production. Apart from this, however, the export of eggs from New Zealand opens up possible prospects of further expansion. The conditions operating against export from New Zealand have been the heavy costs—approximating 7d. per dozen—connected with the crating and shipping of eggs to England, and also during the past few years the great expansion that has taken place in regard to egg-production in Great Britain itself, and in exports from other Empire countries more favourably situated in regard to low-priced grain foods than we are. Costs incidental to export may be capable of reduction with increased quantities, and with improved economic conditions in consuming countries shipments of eggs from New Zealand may present an opportunity of further increasing the value of our exportable products.

The quantity of eggs in shell shipped overseas during the past season reached the highest yet—viz., 12,107 cases of 30 dozen each. As in previous years, the eggs were reported to be well graded both in respect to size and internal quality, but owing to the fact that very large quantities of eggs were being landed in England from other countries simultaneously, and difficulty was experienced in marketing them, the prices realized were somewhat lower than in previous years; nevertheless, it is understood that they allowed of a payable return at least equal to local prices being paid out to producers.

The Wallaceville Poultry Station continues to serve a useful and valuable purpose as an educational and instructional centre, and has enabled instructional officers to disseminate information of an authoritative nature gained from practical experience, and in this connection alone fully justified its existence.

The industry has demonstrated its value during the years of low prices for many of our primary products as an adjunct to the farm, and while the Department's policy has not been in the direction of encouraging an increase of poultry-farming as a sole means of livelihood it has ever championed the keeping of fowls as a side-line to other branches of farming, and this policy is undoubtedly the safe one. The consumption of eggs within the Dominion is capable of great expansion, and with prices in favour of the consumer there seems to be no reason why this should not be accomplished.

WOOL.

The past wool season has been one of the most satisfactory experienced for a number of years. The opening of the season indicated that a strong demand existed for wool, particularly for the finer qualities, and this demand was maintained practically throughout the season, and only towards the final sales of the season when buyers' requirements had been satisfied did wool show a decided downward price tendency. During the season 655,220 bales were offered for sale by auction, of which 613,262 bales were sold, the average price per pound being 11.31d., equal to £16 8s. 9.31d. per bale, as against 5.16d. and £7 10s. 5.72d. respectively for last year. The practice of skirting the fleeces at shearing and arranging for the wool to be binned at the wool-stores is being availed of to a greater extent each year by small growers, and has much to commend it. It is estimated that approximately 70,000 bales were so dealt with. Wool held over from previous years was disposed of at practically the same price as this season's wool, and those farmers and others who had such wool in store benefited according to their holding.

RABBIT NUISANCE.

Throughout the Dominion the past season was a favourable one climatically for the breeding and increase of the rabbit pest, nevertheless a very fair measure of control has been maintained in practically all districts. In some areas, mostly back country districts, where rabbits showed a tendency to increase suitable action has been taken to have thorough poisoning operations put in hand.

While favourable climatic conditions were largely responsible for the natural increase of this pest, another factor was the low price ruling for rabbit-skins. Further, the financial position of many farmers has also militated against good work throughout the year, and to assist in this direction every facility to obtain assistance through the Unemployment Board was arranged, and many availed themselves of this. The recent strong upward trend of prices for skins and carcasses augers well for rabbit-destruction measures in the coming winter. Strychnine is becoming more and more the principal lethal agent for the riddance of rabbits, and last year the Department imported 14,000 oz. for sale to settlers. As a consequence there is a diminishing demand for phosphorized pollard and oats. Where availed of, the Unemployment Board's No. 11 Scheme was of considerable assistance in many parts, where settlers combined for the utilization of relief labour for rabbiting. Unfortunately, it is impossible to assess the number of rabbits disposed of under this scheme, but where properly organized much good work was done. The Rabbit Boards functioning throughout the Dominion are all doing good work and showing excellent results. They continue to keep the rabbit pest in their respective districts down to a minimum, and, despite the favourable breeding-season, have the pest well in hand.