

FAT LAMBS AT RUAKURA.

THE SEASON'S EXPERIMENTS.

PRIMROSE MCCONNELL.

ON the 1st February, 1912, 600 Lincoln Romney full-mouthed ewes were put to the rams, half to the Border Leicesters, and half to the Southdowns, at the rate of fifty ewes per ram. Until within a week of lambing the ewes had no feed except pasture-grass. After the rams were removed the ewes were kept in one mob, and were constantly removed from paddock to paddock, and this, I believe, was the secret of their fine condition when the lambing season commenced. From a week previous to lambing until there was a full bite of grass they received a full ration of mangels, which were carted to the paddocks daily, and this was the means of keeping up a good flow of milk—the lambs benefiting accordingly. At the end of November an early paddock of rape was available, on to which at that date the earlier of the unsold lambs were drafted, a second paddock being available when the first was eaten off. With the exception of the last draft of 126, all were sold to local butchers, the said draft being the only one of which the weights of each cross could be compared. The average net price per lamb was 14s., the highest price being 17s. 6d.

The two lambs shown in the accompanying pictures were selected as two of the best from the last draft, and three weeks previous to their being slaughtered were rejected as not being quite finished. They were dressed and weighed by Mr. Jamieson, butcher, Hamilton. The live fasted weights were—Border Leicester cross, 98 lb.; Southdown cross, 78 lb. The dressed weights were—Border Leicester cross, 64 lb.; Southdown cross, 48 lb. The average weight of the last draft of 120 was—Border Leicester cross, 39.09 lb.; Southdown cross, 37.50 lb.; and all were classed as "very prime." Every lamb was fat by the end of January, and not a single cull is left on hand.

Five hundred of the ewes that had suckled lambs were sold on the 4th January, 1913, at 6d. per head more than the buying-in price, which would more than make up for the loss through deaths. Judging from the weights of the last draft, and from information received from butchers who killed previous drafts, the Border Leicester