

A PARTICULAR BREED MUST HAVE A SUITABLE ENVIRONMENT.

A factor to which more importance will have to be attached is the allocating of the different breeds of sheep to country to which they are naturally adapted, and the reservation of suitable areas upon which they can be profitably bred. Take, for example, the Merino, which has been (and in the writer's opinion there is nothing yet in sight to take its particular place) the foundation of our export trade in wool, and to some extent in that of mutton: As already mentioned, the Merino is steadily decreasing in numbers, two of the chief causes possibly being the subdivision of suitable pastoral country for closer settlement, and that half-breds bring better prices. Fortunately for the future maintenance of the Merino as the foundation of southern commercial flocks, large areas of the back country in the South eminently suitable for this breed are unsuitable for closer-settlement purposes, and, so far as one can see, will always remain the home of the Merino. If so, this will be to some extent the means of conserving this valuable sheep, and make it obtainable at prices within the reach of the low-country sheep-farmer who looks to it to renew his crossbred flock. With careful adjustment of areas according to carrying-capacity and proper allocation of the flocks according to their natural requirements, the pastoral lands of the Dominion will always be the nursery of our mutton and wool industry. Next in order come the small grazing-runs of the South Island with their half-breds, and in the North the Romney and Lincoln crosses; next the semi-pastoral areas of second-class lands with the class of crossbreds favoured in the respective Islands, lands with considerable fattening capabilities; and next, and last, the first-class lands and purely agricultural areas, which are essentially the centre of the fat-lamb industry, the fattening-ground of our frozen mutton and the home of the long-woolled stud flocks. Under the above process a steady migration of the flocks is taking place, each class of country fulfilling its part in this great national industry; and with careful selection and mating at the hands of owners there need be no pessimistic apprehensions concerning its future.

SYSTEMS OF CROSSING RECOMMENDED.

For the information of the more or less inexperienced sheep-farmer, the following is a list of a few crosses which may assist as a guide of what to do and what not to do:—

A profitable and popular form of mating sheep for comparatively dry southern pastoral country: Purebred English Leicester, Border Leicester, or Lincoln ram to purebred Merino ewes—progeny half-bred.

Half-bred ewes put to English Leicester, Border Leicester, or Lincoln ram (continue with ram of same breed as in the original cross)—