

many cases even though an apprenticeship were served in a sound practical school. Remembering this, and that in this young country many of our farmers have not graduated on the land, but have taken up pastoral pursuits practically as novices, it would be surprising were all the men breeding sheep in New Zealand capable of producing the best types of animals, or even of observing the elementary rules necessary to the maintenance of good type and constitution. Education is necessary if a general appreciation of the importance of observing the accepted principles in breeding is to be secured. In this connection it is much to be desired that reform should be effected in the method of judging sheep at our agricultural shows. If the exhibits are to merely interest competing breeders or even competent authorities the present system may serve a purpose; but if the bulk of our farmers are to gain any information the reason for the awards should be plainly stated, so that any visitor may understand the placing of the different awards and thus secure some benefit from the competitions. Students' judging competitions should also be encouraged more by our agricultural societies, and generally definite effort should be made to bring prominently before our sheep-farmers a sound knowledge of the ideals to be aimed at in breeding.

#### MAGNITUDE OF THE INTERESTS AT STAKE.

A few figures will indicate the great importance of the sheep-breeding industry, and the dominant part it plays in our national prosperity.

The total number of sheep in the Dominion at 30th April, 1912, was 23,750,153.

The exports for twelve months ending 31st March, 1912, were as follows:—

Mutton and lamb exported and locally consumed,	£
6,138,176 carcasses, value .. .. .	4,447,042
Sheep (live) exported, 7,855, value .. .. .	40,000
Wool exported, 176,963,607 lb.; locally utilized,	
206,250 lb., value .. .. .	6,785,234
Skins, pelts, fat, and by-products, value .. .. .	943,183
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	£12,215,459

From the above figures it will be observed that the amount received from wool, mutton, and by-products is equal to about 10s. 3d. per head on the flocks of the Dominion. To further demonstrate the