

EXPORTATION OF EGGS.

POINTS FOR GUIDANCE OF PRODUCERS.

F. C. BROWN, Chief Poultry Instructor.

WITH the object of testing outside markets in order to relieve the local market when the latter is oversupplied, and to ascertain the best means of shipping eggs abroad, the New Zealand Poultry Association proposes to make a trial shipment of eggs to London in the coming spring. The shipment is to comprise 2,000 cases of fresh eggs of 30 dozen each, and a quantity of egg-pulp. It is anticipated that the returns will be payable, while the fact that large numbers of eggs are to be sent out of the country will undoubtedly have a strengthening effect on the local markets. Eggs produced in the winter months invariably give profitable returns, but it is the output of the more favourable periods for egg-production, which often has to be sold at a poor margin of profit, that it is intended to relieve. The export of a due proportion of these eggs is therefore most desirable, providing always that they have fair prospect of a payable market abroad.

In reckoning the prices likely to be secured for eggs on the London market, as a guide for comparing these with local values, sufficient consideration may perhaps not be given to the special quality of eggs required for the oversea trade. Thus, in considering the proposed trial shipment sufficient stress will probably not be laid on the fact that the eggs must be of undoubted quality, to say nothing of the risks by way of breakages in transit, &c. In this country top prices may often be obtained for eggs of poor quality, but on the London market it is entirely different. To compete successfully on that market not only must the eggs be fresh and spotlessly clean and inviting, but they must be uniform in size—namely, 2 oz. in weight—while eggs of different colours must be kept separate. The bloom, the colour of the yolk, and the size of the air-cell (this being an indication of age) must also be taken into account. Further, the eggs must be carefully graded, and packed in the best possible condition and style.

Such eggs would no doubt realize special payable prices at any period of the year on the local market, having regard to the fact that in too many cases the market rate is fixed just on eggs, quite irrespective of their size and age. Here the question arises, has the local market been fully exploited with eggs of the right quality? Be this as it may, the fact remains that the great bulk of producers at the present time in this country have yet to learn that great essential of marketing their eggs to the best advantage. Unfortunately, poultry-keeping at present suffers more through the weak system of marketing adopted than perhaps any other rural industry.

If the trial export shipment of eggs is to be a success it is imperative that distinct improved methods be adopted as compared with the manner in which the local trade is generally catered for. Failing