

## EMPIRE WOOL SURVEY.

REPORT BY DR. NICHOLLS ON NEW ZEALAND CONDITIONS.

It will be recalled that Dr. J. E. Nicholls, of Leeds, visited New Zealand last year in connection with a survey of conditions of wool-production within the British Empire, and furnished a short preliminary report to the New Zealand Wool Research Committee, which was published in this *Journal* for April, 1929. The first part of a general interim report, dealing with New Zealand, has recently been issued from Torridon by the British Research Association for the Woollen and Worsted Industries.

In his introduction Dr. Nicholls makes the following explanation: "It will emerge in the report that the attitude of mind preserved throughout has been that which considers the foundations of the industry as a whole resident in the live animal, and that wool, as used in manufacture, is the product at a particular moment of a set of phenomena which are in continuous progression. This results in a fundamental difference in point of view between producer and utilizer, but it is hoped that a common realization of each other's problems will result in progress in the industry as a whole. Further, it is this attitude which has been instrumental in giving rise to this present survey and which has influenced the form of this report."

The report deals with various aspects of the pastoral industry of the Dominion, much of the ground traversed being familiar locally and not calling especially for quotation. Extracts are made here of sections treating of the stud flocks and the wools of New Zealand respectively. The latter section may be regarded as the most suggestive part of the report for our wool-growers. In regard to the flocks, it will be noted that Dr. Nicholls uses the statistics for 1927; there has been no very material change, however, in the relative positions during the two subsequent years. The matter indicated is as follows:—

### The Stud Flocks of New Zealand and the Breeding Centres.

The animals from stud flocks influence in time the general standard of the various breeds, and although perhaps the majority of breeders do not use stud rams they are indirectly dependent upon the stud breeders for the quality of their stock and any improvement which may be effected. The 1927 figures record that of the total number of sheep in the Dominion 365,094 were stud sheep entered in the flock-books, 6,759,713 were sheep of a distinctive breed, but not entered in flock-books (including 1,229,346 half-bred merinos), and the number of crossbred and other sheep was 18,524,209. It may safely be said that most of the rams used in ordinary flocks came from the rank of the "sheep of a distinctive breed but not entered," and particularly among the smaller farmers, the breeders of stock for the fat-lamb trade, the indiscriminate use of rams of inferior type is prevalent, and general improvement of the standard of stock in the country could best be attained by education, by demonstration, to the use of higher-grade rams.

The general types of stud sheep may be briefly discussed in the order in which the breeds are recorded in the Official Year-book, 1928.

Merino stud sheep numbered 29,971 in 1927, being confined almost entirely to the South Island, particularly Marlborough, Canterbury, and