adequate facilities cannot be provided it is better to leave the whole job of preparation to the wool-broker. The usual charge for skirting and classing is ½d. per lb., and the broker will use his discretion as to the best method of disposal of small lots by binning, etc. (see below).

1. (b) Even with a small clip it is desirable that skirting should be carried out at shearing time whenever possible, because the fleece is then in its best condition for this operation. It has just come off the sheep and has not yet been disarranged and tangled by rolling, pressing, and unrolling, as would be the case with skirting when it reached the woolstore. If properly thrown out on the wool table, the different portions of the fleece are easy to distinguish and proper skirting can be efficiently carried out. (For full details of this process see "New Zealand Journal of Agriculture," Nov., 1944, p. 453). Where the broker has only to class the wool much less labour is involved, and the standard charge is ¼d. per lb.

1. (c) Where the quantities of wool warrant it and the necessary labour and facilities are available, classing on the farm has much to recommend it, and costs a good deal less than when done by the broker. Where the grower has the necessary skill he may class his own wool, but it is more usual to employ a professional classer to take complete charge of the woolroom.

Space does not permit a detailed discussion of the objects and benefits of wool-classing, but good classing should divide the clip into a few main lines with clear-cut distinctions between them. After the removal of inferior wool by skirting the fleece is the unit, and as many fleeces as possible of similar type are assembled together to make each line. As far as practicable the oddments such as belly wool, pieces, locks, etc., which are products of the skirting process, are also assembled into the largest possible even lines. Some fleeces, and small quantities of oddments, which on account of certain special characteristics cannot be fitted into any of the main lines, are usually sent to the broker for binning (see below).

Efficient classing benefits all parties concerned. The grower receives a better price for his product, and eventually his station brand—which is equivalent to his "trade-mark," achieves a good reputation with the buyers. The broker prefers to display well-classed clips in preference to shoddily-prepared wool, and his selling job is made easier. The buyer can select what he wants with greater facility, can value with more confidence and accuracy, and under the auction system can bid up to the last farthing for a desirable line of wool. Under the present appraisal system well-classed wools receive a definite premium over poorly-prepared lots. (The reasons for this are fully explained in the article "Wool Appraisement—How the Scheme Works"—see "New Zealand Journal of Agriculture," November, 1944).

The costs involved under the auction system were transport charges from farm to store, insurance in transit, warehousing, and commission, also the levy of 6d. per bale. These charges usually amounted to between 4 and 5 per cent. of the gross return to the farmer on his wool. The charges for skirting, classing, binning, etc., mentioned elsewhere are, of course, superimposed on the costs just mentioned, which cover simply the display and sale of the wool. Under the present appraisement system the broker is paid §d. per lb. by the Government for displaying and selling the wool, so this amount is not a direct charge on the farmer, although he pays it indirectly by getting that much less for his wool. He still pays directly for transport.

1. (d), (e), and (f) Binning (or pooling as it is sometimes called) is the method used for the effective treatment of even the smallest quantities of wool, and all brokers now provide this service for their clients. The facilities available and the skill with which the method is applied vary a good deal from firm to firm, and some brokers have made more of a specialty of it than others. The system derives its name from the large number of bins which are provided to separate up the different grades of wool. Some brokers provide well over 200 of these bins. Each fleece received is graded as it passes over the wool table and allotted to the appropriate bin, where it joins other fleeces of similar type and quality, to make an even, uniform line of wool. When sufficient wool has accumulated in a bin it is offered for sale or appraisement under the firm's brand. The farmer is credited with the value according to the weight of his wool which went into each bin. The charge for binning is usually §d. per lb., and for binning and skirting §d.

It is provided in the rules of the New Zealand Wool Brokers' Association that lots of 3 bales and under (with certain minor exceptions) are to be known as "star" lots, and are not to be offered for sale in the main catalogue. Under the auction system such wools tend to be neglected by the main buyers, and their price suffers accordingly. At present they receive full value under the appraisement scheme, but are still avoided whenever possible, as they waste valuable time and space. In practice the brokers avoid making star lots whenever they can, and the principal method employed is known as interlotting or grouping. Under this system a minimum of eight bales of similar type are grouped together, and sold as a single lot. The farmer does not submerge the identity of his brand, but obviously could no longer place a reserve on his wool under the auction system, as it was sold along with that from several other properties. At present, of course, no reserves can be placed on wool. Interlotting is something of a makeshift, and the results are a compromise. Naturally, with a line of mixed wool of this type the buyer or appraiser tends to value on a conservative basis, and while the owner of the poorest wool in the lot **may** get more than it is worth, the owner of the best wool will certainly lose by it. In most cases the owner of the wool would secure a higher **net return** by sending his wool to a reputable firm for binning (even after paying the extra §d. per lb.) than by allowing it to be interlotted, which costs him only 1/6 per bale.

2. There are no exact figures available on the quantity of wool which was shipped direct to London for sale at the large central wool auctions held there before the war. At one time a large part of our wool was disposed of in this way, but in the years just preceding the present war the amount was probably below 10 per cent. of our annual clip. Those who still sent their wool to London claimed that in doing so they received better returns over a period of years than they would have got at the New Zealand auction sales. Their contention is almost impossible to prove on account of the difficulty of securing valid comparisons. There is no doubt that in some seasons London prices were definitely in advance of New Zealand parity, and for some specialty lines of wool (e.g. scoured) this was nearly always the case, but in the long run and covering all types of wool there is not enough available evidence to prove anything. Selling in New Zealand is certainly easier, the time lag before payment is much shorter, and the producer has better control of his wool.

3. In the early days of colonisation a number of the large sheep stations