

Until the outbreak of the Second World War all shearing at Glenarary was done with blades, but owing to the acute shortage of blade shearers at that time, the owners were forced to change to machine shearing and that practice has been continued. It is worthy of note that there have been no serious losses of sheep since the change-over.

Seven handpieces are used in the shed and in good weather with this number of shearers shearing takes about 8 weeks; in a bad year when there has been much wet weather shearing has extended to the end of February. Seven musterers, 1 packer, 7 shearers, 6 hands for picking up, skirting, and rolling, 2 for pressing, and 1 for penning are required at shearing. A professional wool classer is engaged every year and his services have proved valuable, as with such a large clip to deal with a much more uniform classing is possible than would be the case if this work had to be done by a less experienced person.

#### Disposal of the Wool Clip

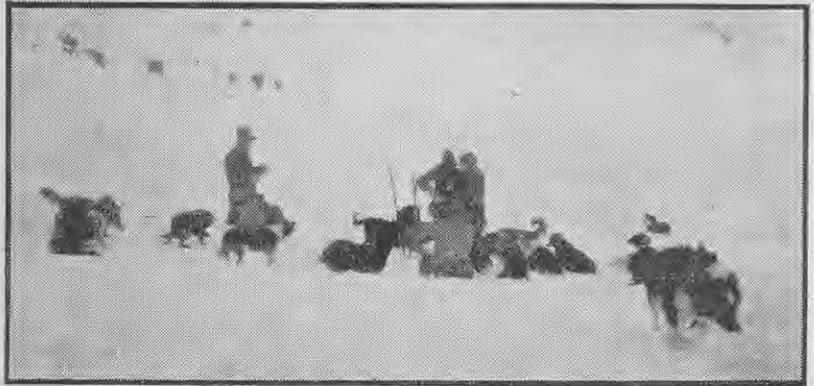
The wool clip yields about 640 bales every year and is sold under the run's own mark; it has an established reputation. As is the usual custom, the wool is pressed during shearing and disposed of immediately, being transported by lorry and rail.

#### Sheep Management

The management of the 30,000 sheep is of course greatly influenced by the general policy of the run. At the time of the autumn muster in April all sheep are put through the shed and crutched, dipped, and drafted for age by age mark. No sheep are carried beyond full mouth; at this age the cast ewes are disposed of privately and the tops of the cast wethers are disposed of for freezing and the balance wintered on supplementary feed, usually choux moellier and hay, and sold the following spring.

There is no special weaning muster at Glenarary, as any such muster would be necessary just after the ewes and lambs had been turned out to the high

## MANAGEMENT OF SHEEP



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country; consequently weaning is also done at the fall muster. The weaned lambs are grazed in the paddocks on the flats until they are put on to supplementary feed, and the ewes go out to the tupping blocks. Any cull 2-tooths are not put to the ram, but are turned out on the low tussock country for another year and they are then put to the ram as 4-tooths.

#### Tupping and Lambing

There are 5 tupping blocks, which, if necessary, are all used. Rams go out as near as possible to the first week in May: The oldest rams go to the roughest blocks; the younger rams are used on the easier country. All the tupping blocks are visited periodically by shepherds and sheep rounded up. At the end of tupping the rams are drafted in yards on the tupping blocks. The ewes are then let run on the low country until shearing time.

Lambing begins during the first week in October. Ewes are kept under general observation during lambing, but this is not made a special job; the lambing percentage is 75 to 80 and

all lambs are kept, no attempt being made to fatten any lambs, as all are required for replacements.

#### Use of High Country

As much use as possible, within the limits of safety, is made of the high country, but there is the ever-present risk of snow. By good judgment and by getting all the sheep down to the winter country before snow normally falls the risk may be minimised to some extent. Normally ewes and lambs are put out on the high country immediately after shearing, but wethers are on this country earlier, perhaps in September, according to when the snow clears. All sheep are below the snow line by the end of April.

There have been some very anxious times and some heavy losses because of snow at Glenarary; if all the sheep are on the recognised "safe" country and snow comes, nothing need be done about it, but if sheep are in the high country and snow falls in, say, April, there is serious trouble. Sheep cannot be mustered in deep snow, and snow experienced in April does not usually clear away quickly, as it normally heralds the beginning of winter. If the snow is not heavy, some mustering may be attempted, but heavy snow entails snow raking, which is the most heart-breaking of all jobs on a high-country sheep run.

Some idea of the risk of damage and loss from snow may be gained from the records of Glenarary, where in 1945 there was a loss of 3700 sheep owing to heavy snow in April. In 1939, although heavy snow was recorded, losses were comparatively light, as the sheep were all in winter country. One of the worst years was 1933. Snow fell in April and snow raking had to be done from April 20 until June 1. Between April and June 2000 ewes, 3000 lambs, and 1000 wethers were lost. In 1918 and 1923 there were also heavy snow and losses of sheep, although neither year was as bad as 1933. Snow is one of the extremely unpleasant phases of life on a high-country run, and beside being a source of heavy financial loss, snow can, in a relatively short time, nullify the work of many years.



All haystacks are carefully covered.