

DOMINION DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LIVE STOCK BRANCH.
SHEEP AND GOAT DIVISION.

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REVIEW OF CO-OPERATIVE WOOL SALES IN CANADA.

PREPARING WOOL FOR MARKET.

BY

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Sheep raising should represent one of the most important phases of live stock production in Canada. The climate is conducive to thrift in sheep, and conditions of agriculture obtaining here, although varying in mode in the different provinces are, in most respects, adaptable to the successful prosecution of some system of sheep farming. In fact, no country of relative area possesses so many natural advantages for their production. Yet the sheep industry has never occupied the prominent position in Canadian agriculture which its importance demands.

One of the reasons reflecting in the past a reactionary influence against the development of the sheep industry on a larger scale has been the low price of wool which until recently so generally existed. The sheep raiser receiving only a few cents per pound of wool had no incentive to engage extensively upon its pursuit since the disposal of mutton could not be depended upon to return a justifiable profit to the producer; and on the same account many farmers possessing admirable conditions for the raising of sheep would not be induced to enter the business.

It has been apparent, therefore, that a greater remuneration from the sale of wool would act as a direct stimulus in creating a more favourable attitude by farmers toward sheep raising. As a means to this end, the minister, appreciating the importance of the sheep industry, instructed officers of the branch to undertake a study of the character of Canadian wool and determine what features pertaining to it placed it in such ill-repute for manufacturing purposes. Results of these investigations showed clearly that the principal objections obtained chiefly with condition. Inherently the quality of Canadian wool for those grades produced here was most satisfactory. These grades comprised mainly the medium and coarse classes, which possessed a distinct and serviceable place in manufacture, and although the scoured pound was not so valuable as the fine grades, yet to produce the latter would radically lower the standard of mutton characteristics. The innate character of the wool was not at fault. A ready sale for these grades did exist. They are closely akin to the British types, always in keen demand. The fault lay with the preparation of the wool and its condition. The low price did not really represent the price of low wool, but rather the price of wool made low through careless preparation, the inclusion of dirt and much other extraneous material which increased the cost of manufacture and created waste in the factory. Responsibility for this condition was due to a great degree to the manner of purchase, the flat price, which gave to the sheep raiser little encouragement or incentive to prepare a better article. The farmer's knowledge of wool was restricted.