

SESS. II.—1879.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# SHEEP INSPECTORS' REPORTS,

FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1878.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.*

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Sheep Inspector's Office, Napier.

SIR,—I have the honor to forward my report for the year 1878, and enclose the sheep returns, which show an increase of 119,611 sheep over the previous year.

The enclosed returns comprise 810,550 ewes, 668,780 wethers, and 16,438 rams, or a total of 1,495,768 sheep over six months old in the Hawke's Bay Sheep District on 1st May, 1878, as against 713,600 ewes, 648,246 wethers, and 14,311 rams, or a total of 1,376,157 sheep in May, 1877.

Although feed is now showing up in lightly-stocked country, the past season has been characterized by extreme drought, both sheep and cattle having suffered in a degree formerly unknown here, and an unusually high rate of mortality has been the consequence.

Notwithstanding that the sheep returns of next month will embrace about 100,000 sheep in the Patea country, recently annexed to this sheep district, still, beyond this addition, no very material increase can be expected.

Since the date of my last report no sheep have been introduced overland for this district. The imports by sea have been limited to sheep for stud purposes, and comprise 393 long-wool rams, 53 long-wool ewes, 530 merino rams, and 620 merino ewes, or a total of 1,596 sheep. The exports during the same period, coastwise and overland to neighbouring sheep districts, amount to about 70,000; and about 200,000 have been absorbed by provincial consumption and boiling down.

The lambing of last season was under the average, and the clip light, but generally sound.

The present depressed state of the wool market, and lack of money accommodation, is exercising a deterrent influence on the hitherto marked improvement of station properties in the way of fencing, and sowing of English grasses.

I have again much pleasure in reporting all the flocks in this district free from scab, and otherwise healthy.

I have already reported the damage done by the recent extensive bush fires to the protective fences at the southern boundary, and will report further as to the necessary repairs required so soon as I can make an inspection of the locality.

Whilst regretting, in consequence of the new law prohibiting Inspectors from being sheepowners, my enforced relinquishment of the position I have so long held, it will be a source of some satisfaction to me to hand over to my successor this the most important and only clean sheep district in the North Island; and in concluding this report I have great pleasure in testifying to the uniform kindness I have received from the sheepowners in the performance of my duties, and to their ever-ready assistance and cordial co-operation in carrying out the provisions of the various Acts is to be ascribed in no small degree the immunity from scab which our flocks have so long enjoyed.

I have, &c.,

G. PEACOCK,  
Chief Inspector of Sheep.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.