

1885.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE ANNUAL SHEEP RETURNS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MAY, 1884.

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

Mr. B. P. BAYLY to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,— Colonial Secretary's Office (Stock Branch), Wellington, 26th May, 1885.

I have the honour to lay before you the annual sheep returns for the year ending 31st May, 1884.

The total number of sheep in the colony on that date was 13,978,520, as against 13,306,329, or an increase of 672,191 on return of previous year.

In the several districts the increase or decrease during the year have been as follows: Auckland, increase, 10,263; Napier, increase, 157,804; Taranaki, decrease, 3,292; Wanganui, increase, 8,233; Rangitikei, increase, 53,769; Wellington, increase, 67,983; Nelson, increase, 4,432; Marlborough, increase, 39,691; Canterbury, increase, 217,829; Westland, increase, 217; Otago, increase, 115,262, notwithstanding a decrease of 44,472 sustained in the Lake and Southland counties.

The classification of sheep can be taken approximately as: Merino, males, 3,292,774; females, 4,173,008. Long-wool, males, 429,533; females, 785,208. Cross-bred, males, 1,977,646; females, 3,320,351. Total, males, 5,699,953; females, 8,278,567: making a grand total of 13,978,520.

On reference to the above return it will be observed that cross-bred sheep again show an enormous increase in comparison with those of other descriptions. Out of the total increase of 672,191, cross-bred show 508,639, or five-sixths of the total increase in the colony for the year.

During the year ended 31st March last, 491,066 frozen carcasses of mutton have been exported, against 247,772 during previous year, being an increase of 243,294. Of these Otago furnished 133,964; Canterbury, 121,627; Marlborough, 15,950; Wellington, 130,436; Napier, 89,089.

For meat-preserving purposes 100,490 sheep were utilized. During the same period Otago supplied 572; Canterbury, 26,374; Marlborough, 757; Wellington, 26,998; Wanganui, 19,270; Napier, 24,884; Auckland, 1,635. The total number treated exceeds that of last return by some 9,000 sheep.

The number of sheep boiled down for the year ended 31st March last amounted to 52,206. Of these 20,800 were contributed by Marlborough, 22,251 by Wanganui, and 9,155 by Napier, showing a falling-off, as compared with previous year, of 2,667.

There have been exported alive during the same period, 2,165. Of these 2,132 were fat sheep, shipped from Otago to Hobart, and 33 from Canterbury to the Chatham Islands.

The number imported was 935. Of these 835 were stud sheep from Australia and Tasmania, and the remaining 100 were sheep from the Chatham Islands.

Tabulated form B affords general information *in re* sheep districts, number of sheep-owners, number of infected sheep, &c.

By referring to the return of infected sheep, it will be observed that a reduction of 204,943 has been effected during the year, leaving the number on the return for March 31st at an aggregate of 108,995. Of these about 5,500 are located in the North Island, distributed as follows: Wanganui, 1 owner, 195 sheep; Wairarapa, 2 owners, 5,300 sheep. Of these one flock, 800 in number, being the last flock infected, have been destroyed. The remaining flocks I fully anticipate will have obtained clean certificates prior to June 30th, leaving the North Island free from any known scabby or infected flocks.

The remaining infected flocks, 16 in number, are depastured wholly within the Sheep District of Marlborough, and number 102,050, distributed amongst 15 owners. Out of these, three flocks, numbering 30,000, have obtained their clean certificates since March quarter, and fully 20,000 more