

1899.
NEW ZEALAND.

INTERIM RETURN OF SHEEP

IN THE COLONY ON THE 30TH APRIL, 1899.

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

SIR,—

Department of Agriculture (Live-stock Branch),
Wellington, 8th July, 1899.

I have the honour to furnish a statement of the approximate number of sheep in the colony on the 30th April, 1899.

I have, &c.,

JOHN D. RITCHIE,
Chief Inspector of Stock.

The Hon. the Minister for Agriculture.

APPROXIMATE NUMBER of SHEEP in the Colony on the 30th April, 1899.

	Number of Sheep.		Increase.	Decrease.
	1898.	1899.		
Auckland	898,515	901,322	2,807	...
Napier	4,525,348	4,514,860	...	10,488
Wellington-West Coast	4,441,082	4,514,519	73,437	...
Marlborough-Nelson	936,936	859,953	...	76,983
Canterbury-Kaikoura	4,910,385	4,755,497	...	154,888
Otago	3,961,459	3,664,551	...	296,908
	19,673,725	19,210,702	76,244	539,267
	Less increase		...	76,244
	Total decrease		...	463,023
	Increase, North Island		...	65,756
	Decrease, South Island		...	528,779

The shortage of 463,023 sheep as shown above must be put down to the effect of the continuous drought which existed up to the middle of last year. In the interim return for 1898 it was shown that there had been an increase of 785,235 carcasses of mutton and lambs exported, and over 200,000 old sheep boiled down in excess of the average, or close on a million of sheep dealt with over the previous year. A considerable number of these would have come into the returns for this year except for the shortage in feed, and consequent necessity of disposing of them. Further, there was a considerable mortality in many flocks last spring, the ewes and young sheep being in low condition.

The export of mutton and lambs shows a decrease of 263,442 carcasses for the year ending 31st March, 1899.

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