

1903.
NEW ZEALAND.

INTERIM RETURN OF SHEEP

IN THE COLONY ON THE 30TH APRIL, 1903.

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

SIR,—
I have the honour to furnish a statement of the approximate number of sheep in the colony on the 30th April, 1903.
The Hon. the Minister for Agriculture.

Department of Agriculture,
Wellington, 7th July, 1903.
I have, &c.,
JOHN D. RITCHIE,
Chief Inspector of Stock.

APPROXIMATE NUMBER of SHEEP in the Colony on the 30th April, 1903.

District.	Number of Sheep.		Increase.	Decrease.
	1902.*	1903.		
Auckland	879,852	781,376	...	98,476
Napier	4,631,151	4,423,564	...	207,587
Wellington–West Coast	4,775,343	4,307,587	...	467,756
Marlborough–Nelson	955,574	909,332	...	46,242
Canterbury–Kaikoura	5,135,465	4,961,414	...	174,051
Otago	3,965,342	3,618,776	...	346,566
Total	20,342,727	19,002,049	...	1,340,678
Decrease, North Island			...	773,819
Decrease, South Island			...	566,859
Total decrease			...	1,340,678

* Complete returns.

It is not difficult to account for this very large decrease. Looking at the export of frozen mutton and lamb it will be seen that 1,286,824 more carcasses were exported for the year ending 31st March last than for the previous year. The figures are as follows :—

	1902.	1903.	Increase.
Mutton (carcasses) •	1,665,622	2,531,993	866,371
Lamb (carcasses)	1,684,091	2,104,544	420,453
Total	3,349,713	4,636,537	1,286,824

Live sheep to the number of 48,447 were exported from the colony for 1902–3, as against 3,579 for 1901–2, the increase being 44,868. This, added to 1,286,824, makes a grand total of 1,331,692, or practically the whole of the decrease in our flocks.

It must also be borne in mind that in parts of the colony last year the lambing was below the average.

The increase in the number of sheep last year was under 110,000, so that there was nothing to warrant the excessive export.

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