

This decrease in the number of sheep, besides affecting the meat trade, has naturally a disastrous influence upon the wool trade. The following table will show the distribution and decline of the production of wool in the several districts of Ontario in 1896, as compared with the previous year :—

Districts.	1896.		1895.	
	Pounds.	Lbs. per Fleece.	Pounds.	Lbs. per Fleece.
Lake Erie	625,055	5.81	702,465	5.71
Lake Huron	775,907	5.75	877,098	5.78
Georgian Bay	730,157	5.65	855,048	5.62
West Midland	1,001,499	5.84	1,130,283	5.87
Lake Ontario	934,599	5.96	1,013,661	5.91
St. Lawrence & Ottawa	982,491	5.11	1,090,638	5.08
East Midland	352,381	5.38	372,298	5.26
Northern	179,298	5.29	173,326	5.33
The Province	5,581,387	5.63	6,214,811	5.60

In 1896 there were 991,371 fleeces, as against 1,109,140 in 1895; the decline in fleeces was greater than in the number of pounds of wool, as the average fleece shows a gain of .3 pound in weight. Statistics for an average of the past fifteen years show that in the Lake Ontario district the breeders have accomplished the best work, securing a weight of 5.96 pounds per fleece. It is very unsatisfactory to learn of the decline of the wool industry, and the only comfort that can be obtained is to realize that the conditions in Canada are not peculiar to this country, but are apparently a part of a world-wide movement.

THE LOBSTER FISHERIES.

The Dominion Government fishery officials are said to be about to make certain changes in the regulations governing the taking of lobsters. In the Maritime Provinces it is understood that a regulation prohibiting the taking of lobsters under 10½ inches in length in the Bay of Fundy, is to go into effect on January 1st next. Referring to this, the *Yarmouth Times* says: "The effect of the proposed regulation would be to close every canning establishment on the Bay of Fundy shore, and give a monopoly of the canning business to the eastern part of the province and P. E. Island. Large lobsters are shipped fresh to the Boston and New York market, while the smaller ones are sold to the canning establishments, which could not do business if they had to pay the price large lobsters command. The canning proprietors are practically the outfitters for all the fishermen. From them the fishermen obtain traps, lines, etc., and pay for them in small lobsters used for canning purposes. When they are unable to furnish lobsters enough to pay for their outfits, the charge usually remains against them till the next season. Now there has already been invested in this district fully \$25,000 in outfits, cans made, and other preparations for carrying on business, practically all of which would simply be thrown away if the proposed regulation were put in force at the beginning of the fishing season next month."

INFERIOR TEA.

That Canada has for some time been made the dumping ground of inferior teas that could not pass the inspection of United States officials has been frequently alleged. The Dominion authorities are taking energetic measures to prevent this practice. Recently 160 pkgs. of black tea, consigned to a prominent Montreal tea man, was seized by the customs department in that city as unfit for consumption. The owner, however, managed in the end to convince the authorities that it was not of a dangerous character. At present the examiners in the Montreal Custom House have two or three lots in their charge which stand a most excellent chance of either being destroyed or shipped out of the country.

Last week a circular was issued by the Department of Customs to collectors of customs, calling attention to the provisions of the present tariff which prohibits the importation of tea so adulterated as to make it unfit for use. Collectors are directed to forward to Ottawa for approval, samples of all tea imported into Canada from Great Britain or the United States, before delivery of the tea, unless the importer produces a certificate from the British or United States customs, to the effect that the tea has been duly approved for home consumption in the United Kingdom or the United States. When tea is imported on a through bill of lading, or entered for immediate transportation, and not accompanied by a certificate of inspection, collectors are required to exercise due care in seeing that the tea is fit for use, and

are to test the tea themselves as to its genuineness. If, after such tests, the collector has reason to believe that the tea is not entitled to be entered for consumption in Canada, samples from the suspected lots are to be forwarded to Ottawa for examination. Another circular to collectors prescribes the nature of the export entry, which is to be prepared in duplicate, in connection with the goods to be exported, in place of the oath which has hitherto been required.

WOOD MARKET IN BRITAIN.

The wood market in Britain is not active, according to latest accounts. The strikes and threats of strikes among workmen of various trades have affected business in timber and lumber, and are still affecting them. Supplies of wood of almost all kinds are ample, and in some cases, as for instance at Liverpool, pine deals and boards, in excessive supply. A Liverpool circular of 1st December says that the arrivals of shipping, timber laden, at that port from Canada during the eleven months of 1897 had been 544,212 tons, which is 62,000 tons in excess of same period, 1896, and 144,000 tons more than the like eleven months of 1895. Stocks of Oregon and British Columbian pine are considerable, in Liverpool, and the supply of pitch pine ample. We append a comparison, showing that of nine varieties of wood mentioned, the only ones in which imports have not increased during 1897 are Norway and Baltic :—

Liverpool Import, 11 mos.		1895.	1896.	1897.
Quebec pine	Logs.	14,821	19,164	21,823
St. John pine	"	311	15	96
Pitch pine	"	69,800	83,598	101,722
Baltic and European timber	"	2,336	2,226	3,118
New Brunswick, etc., deals..	Pieces.	4,800,805	7,531,745	9,401,763
Quebec deals	"	2,717,530	3,638,859	5,202,356
Baltic deals	"	841,912	1,495,347	1,345,116
Norway flooring boards	"	3,400,805	4,598,119	4,231,196
Pitch pine planks and boards	"	443,624	617,254	1,338,561

A comparison of the total imports of sawn and hewn timber into all parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland finds its accustomed place in the *Timber Trades Journal*. It gives the figures for the month of October last, and also for the ten months ending with that month. The totals of hewn and sawn are 8,389,618 loads for ten months this year, compared with 7,386,538 loads in the same period of 1896. The increase this year is thus about twelve per cent. There are one hundred and eighteen ports in the list, of which 73 are in England, 29 in Scotland, 16 in Ireland, and increased import is common to nearly all. We copy the figures of a score of the leading ports: Of Cardiff the increase was 21 per cent., and at Liverpool about the same. Grangemouth and Newcastle are the only ports of moment that imported more last year than this. Newcastle took in 1896 more than twice the quantity of this year. A list follows:

Port.	Loads, Hewn and Sawn.	
	10 months 1897.	10 months 1896.
London	1,718,304	1,551,438
Cardiff	775,408	610,950
Liverpool	716,972	572,726
Hull	696,212	583,494
Hartlepool West	455,553	348,919
Grimsby	339,015	325,535
Newport, Monmouth	245,124	216,031
Glasgow	205,683	149,853
Grangemouth	179,884	197,091
Belfast	172,895	118,537
Bristol	148,482	123,232
Gloucester	195,341	155,776
Manchester	166,161	137,205
Sunderland	147,411	111,291
Leith	138,551	113,974
Greenock	121,424	102,939
Borrowstounness	110,758	87,705
Fleetwood	110,461	86,387
South Shields	100,464	45,477
Dublin	97,309	72,196
Total at 118 ports	8,389,618	7,386,538

A NEW CATTLE MARKET.

There has been for some time dissatisfaction with the condition of the Toronto cattle market. Large sums of money have been expended upon the premises, and in order to meet the requirements of stockmen an additional outlay is, we understand, contemplated. A syndicate of local capitalists propose, however, to put before the council a proposition by which a franchise of market privileges shall be given them for a period of years in consideration of their paying the city a certain rate of interest on an amount of money equal to that now invested in the present market. The market would then pass from the control of the city to that of a private company. The present premises would be vacated and a lot north of the Dundas street bridge, with access to both the G.T.R. and C.P.R. lines would be selected. The investment of the city in markets has not proved very remunerative and the council