

XXIII.

STATEMENT OF THE INTRODUCTION AND PROGRESS OF THE BREED OF FINE-WOLLED SHEEP IN NEW SOUTH WALES, DELIVERED AT THE RIGHT HON. LORD HOBART'S OFFICE, 26TH JULY, 1803.

THE samples of wool brought from New South Wales having excited the particular attention of the merchants and principal English manufacturers, Captain M'Arthur considers it his duty respectfully to represent to His Majesty's ministers, that he has found, from an experience of many years, the climate of New South Wales is peculiarly adapted to the increase of fine-woolled sheep; and that, from the unlimited extent of luxuriant pastures with which that country abounds, millions of those valuable animals may be raised in a few years, with but little other expense than the hire of a few shepherds.

The specimens of wool that Captain M'Arthur has with him, have been inspected by the best judges of wool in this kingdom; and they are of opinion that it possesses a softness superior to many of the wools of Spain; and that it certainly is equal, in every valuable property, to the very best that is to be obtained from thence.

The sheep producing this fine wool are of the Spanish kind, sent originally from Holland to the Cape of Good Hope, and taken from thence to Port Jackson.

Captain M'Arthur being persuaded that the propagation of those animals would be of the utmost consequence to this country, procured, in 1797, three rams and five ewes; and he has since had the satisfaction to see them rapidly increase, their fleeces augment in weight, and the wool very visibly improve in quality. When Captain M'Arthur left Port Jackson in 1801, the heaviest fleece that had then been shorn weighed only three pounds and a half; but he has received reports of 1802, from which he learns that the fleeces of his sheep were increased to five pounds each;* and that the wool is finer and softer than the wool of the preceding year. The fleece of one of the sheep originally imported from the Cape of Good Hope, has been valued here at four shillings and sixpence per pound; and a fleece of the same kind bred in New South Wales is estimated at six shillings a pound.

Being once in possession of this valuable breed, and having ascertained that they improved in that climate, he became anxious to ex-

* In the grease. The average weight of the fleeces of fine-woolled sheep in New South Wales, washed, is two and a half pounds.