

1021. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Were you consulted as regarded that arrangement?—The only knowledge which I have of the whole thing is that Mr. Gibson, I believe, came to Wellington, and his lawyers drew up a long petition of twenty-eight clauses, which the Government forwarded to me to report upon.

1022. A petition to whom?—To the Government, giving reasons why the penalty should be remitted. I advised the Government not to remit the penalty. These are the closing remarks I made in regard to this: "There is no doubt that the infliction of heavy penalties has to some extent the effect of crippling the resources of the sheepowner; but, on the other hand, the remission of these penalties has not always had the desired effect of encouraging the sheepowner to use stronger measures for cleaning his sheep. I would suggest that, instead of remitting the fine, the sheepowner should be required to enter into an undertaking to expend the amount of the fine in fencing or dipping apparatus; and a time should be fixed for the completion of such work. This would insure some progress being made." I am in favour, decidedly, of having the penalty inflicted; but, from my previous experience, it seemed to me that these gentlemen had only to come up to Wellington to get their fines remitted, and I suggested this rather than that there should be a remission of the penalty.

1023. *Mr. Buchanan.*] An unconditional remission of the penalty?—Yes.

1024. What was done with regard to this petition?—I do not know whether the Government acted on this suggestion of mine.

1025. Would you make it quite clear to the Committee whether, if you were consulted, you would be in favour of any remission of the fine at all, conditional or otherwise, in this case, for instance?—Most decidedly not. I think that the fine should in all cases be enforced by the Government. If there are any special cases of hardship, I suppose the proper course would be to petition the House, or some course of that kind. So far as the Inspectors are concerned, they have nothing to do but to carry out the Act.

1026. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you take any notice of those cases as being of special hardship?—It was very rough country; but, on the other hand, the owner had had five years practically to clean his run, without any fines at all.

1027. Do you think there are any exceptional circumstances in these cases which would entitle them to such consideration?—My opinion is that there are no such circumstances. I think that the time has passed altogether for any clemency. I think they have had quite sufficient time allowed them.

1028. Your opinion is that the Act should be carried out strictly?—Decidedly.

1029. Since you have been in charge, have there been fines inflicted in that district and enforced?—I do not think that I have had, as far as I can recollect, any fines under the 23rd section in the Amuri. When the Act came into force, in the Amuri—in every case I think—the runs were cleaned straight off. One case I might mention: Mr. Holmes got his flock of 6,000 sheep scabby, and he asked my advice. It was very rough country, and I advised him to kill them off. He did so, and for that he got no compensation whatever.

1030. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] I think you said that Glenmark was very easily cleaned?—Yes.

1031. Had not Glenmark been scabby for a very long time?—Yes.

1032. Immediately the fines came into force, was not the country soon cleaned?—Mr. Moore was fined continually for many years before I was Inspector. Going through the list of the Canterbury fines before I came up here, I found that he has paid £3,500 in fines.

1033. Do you think the infliction of the fine had anything to do with those sheep being clean?—Mr. Moore's case is very different from Mr. Gibson's.

1034. Do you think he took more vigorous action on account of the fines?—I do not think Mr. Moore did. I thought he had some other reason for keeping his sheep scabby, because it was very easy country to clean.

1035. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] You said that there were no fines under the 23rd clause: do you mean that they were remitted?—There were none inflicted. I am speaking of what is now the north part of the Canterbury District—that is, of the country south of the Waiau. In those cases they had been clean for some two or three years, and some scabby sheep crossed the river. I gave notice for them to be cleaned, and the scabby sheep were killed within the nine months allowed by the Act, so no proceedings were taken. North of the Waiau I have been in charge two years, and during that time I have had no proceedings to take, excepting for sheep straying, because they have cleaned their sheep.

1036. What about Mr. Gibson's run?—I am speaking of the Amuri Subdivision now.

1037. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Perhaps you will explain, Mr. Foster: you say that in the Amuri District, north of the Waiau, you have not had occasion to take proceedings, and no fines were inflicted?—Not under the 23rd section.

1038. Have there been any under any other section?—Yes; the Act has been carried out with regard to allowing sheep to stray, and things of that kind, but these fines have been paid in every case. There have, however, been only two or three instances. In the Kaikouras the fines, so far as I am aware, have all been paid, except those of which you have had evidence.

1039. Were informations systematically laid?—I have never had a breach brought under my notice for which I have not laid an information.

1040. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do you not think these scabby sheep in the Kaikouras entail very great risk of other flocks becoming scabby?—A very great risk, especially at the Cloudy Range end.

1041. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you insisted upon keeping rams out of the flocks in all cases?—I have given notice in every case since I have had charge of the district. I only took charge last September, and then it was too late to do anything. They had notice previously.

1042. Do you know any case in which no attention was paid to such notice?—Not of my own knowledge. Mr. Gibson did not remove the rams until I made him do so last December.

1043. Were any proceedings taken in consequence?—None whatever.