

ewes are mustered for dipping in another month. If any rams are seen with his flock, of course proceedings will be taken against him.

1077. *Mr. Lance.*] We have heard a great deal about the supposed difficulty of cleaning Mr. Ingles's run: do you consider it insuperable?—It is certainly not insuperable.

1078. It would not be necessary to destroy all the sheep?—No; if he had a reasonable amount of fencing.

1079. That fencing is possible?—Yes; it would be far easier than Mr. Gibson's.

1080. *Mr. Buchanan.*] When these fines were inflicted on Messrs. Gibson and Ingles, did you conduct the cases?—I have conducted all the cases since I have had charge.

1081. Had you charge when those fines which have been remitted were imposed?—Not when the first fines were imposed, but when the second convictions were obtained I had charge. I was never assisted by a lawyer.

1082. Is it within your knowledge that the Magistrate came to the conclusion that everything that could be done was done by those gentlemen in cleaning their runs?—I think not. Mr. Whitefoord, the Magistrate who heard the case against Mr. Gibson last March, told Mr. Gibson that the circumstances were such that he could hold out no hope of any remission of the penalties, and would not recommend it.

1083. *Hon. the Chairman.*] He said that in Court?—Yes.

1084. *Mr. Buchanan.*] I am referring to a telegram which appeared in the paper, that went to show that, in consideration of everything having been done that was possible, it was the Magistrate's opinion that the fine should be remitted?—The telegram that you are referring to was entirely wrong, and I considered it my duty to report the matter to the Colonial Secretary. If you will allow me I will read the letter. I sent this to Mr. Cooper, the Under-Secretary, pasting the telegrams on it: "From R. Foster, Amberley, 17th March, 1884.—To G. S. Cooper, Esq., Under-Secretary, Wellington.—I consider it my duty to bring before your attention the above Press Association telegram, which has been published in the leading newspapers. The telegram contains statements which are not true, and are therefore calculated to mislead the Government. The Inspector did not admit that Mr. Gibson had done all that was possible; I simply admitted that he had done a good deal of fencing and had promised to complete certain other fencing which I considered necessary, also that I was satisfied with the mustering so far this season, considering the bad weather he had to contend with. On the other hand, it was proved that the dipping material used last autumn was very inferior, and that the sheep were in a worse state of disease this shearing than at the previous shearing. It is not true that one-half the flocks are clean now, nor is it true that the country is the most rugged in the provincial district; Waipapa, Kincaid, and other runs being infinitely worse to muster. Mr. Gibson's country is practically clear of bush and scrub. I will report more fully in a few days.—REGINALD FOSTER, Inspector in Charge, Kaikoura Sub-division."

1085. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Was it in consequence of that that the fine was remitted?—No. Immediately after the case the Press Association telegram was sent from Kaikoura to the leading newspapers, stating that, notwithstanding Mr. Gibson having done his utmost, the Magistrate had fined him somewhat heavily. I contradicted this in a letter to the Government; but Inspectors are not supposed to write to the newspapers themselves.

1086. Quite so; but that fine was afterwards remitted?—That is the fine for which a bond was given.

1087. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Is it within your knowledge that the Magistrate made any remarks in Court upon the case which might have prompted the Government to remit the fine?—Certainly not. He told Mr. Gibson most distinctly that he could hold out no hope of a remission of the penalty, and would not recommend it.

1088. There were no remarks, either upon the part of the Magistrate or the Inspector conducting the case, to warrant that telegram?—No; we admitted that he had done some sixteen miles of fencing; we admitted also that he had had an extremely bad season for mustering. So it was; we all remember what a bad summer it was.

1089. With regard to this infected district north of the Waiau, the sheep out of which have to be dipped, I have had a table prepared which shows sixteen clean runs within that infected district, with an aggregate of 322,000 sheep. It has been represented to me that in the case of three of these sixteen flocks before they can be dipped they have to travel through four runs; in the case of five more they have to travel through three clean runs; in the case of two they have to travel through two clean runs; in the case of five more they have to travel through one clean run?—Yes.

1090. Now, suppose in the case of any one of these—say in the case of one of the three that have to travel through four runs—the travelling sheep only possess a six-months' certificate?—They might travel with only a three-months' certificate.

1091. Do you consider it a practice conducive to cleaning the country from scab that these sheep should be allowed to travel through four runs, and with scab in the flock to be able as it were to scab these clean runs through which they have to travel?—No; I consider it is one of the greatest flaws we have in the Act. The Act protects clean districts, but does not protect clean runs in infected districts. In all cases where I have an opportunity I ask the owners of any sheep coming from doubtful country to dip the sheep before they leave the station, but we have no power in the Act to compel them to do so.

1092. Is the Tarndale Run in your charge?—Yes.

1093. And in the case of Tarndale sheep travelling to Canterbury, what would be the route?—The same as all the rest—across the Hanmer Plains and through the Leslie Pass to the Waiau to be dipped. We had rather a serious case of that kind this last season, and I drew the attention of Mr. Bayly to it. Some sheep came from the Wairau, I believe; the sheep were perfectly clean, but still all that country is more or less doubtful. Those sheep, numbering some 5,000, travelled through, I suppose, considerably over a hundred miles of country without a dip, through clean runs,