

2188. Who held the position before?—I was the first under these Acts.

2189. Will you explain to the Committee your position in regard to the working of the Acts?—I cannot deviate from the evidence given at an inquiry held two years ago in the case of Telford. There my position was thoroughly defined. I beg to hand in a copy of the evidence taken. [Evidence handed in.]

2190. We want to come to this—information with regard to your duties: have you the control and management of the whole department under the Act in your hands?—No.

2191. Will you state in what particulars it is not under your control?—My position has always been as it is there described. The name Superintending Inspector very nearly explains it. I am interested with details and outside work, to see that the officers perform their duties; if anything comes under my knowledge that requires alteration, or anything of that description, I deem it my duty to forward a report to the Colonial Secretary, who goes through it. I am not in sole charge, nor do I consider myself solely responsible for the whole working of the department.

2192. In cases such as you have mentioned you forward a report of these matters to the Colonial Secretary, and you consider that you are simply the person through whose hands that report passes: do you take any instructions as to reply, or the course you are to adopt?—Scarcely without exception. All my reports dealing with matters of that description will be found on reference to official records; they are nearly invariably passed or memorandumed by Mr. Cooper.

2193. Then, you do not consider yourself responsible for the action that is taken in carrying out the Act?—Not wholly.

2194. Only in matters of detail?—It is a somewhat bastard position. I cannot say exactly what position I occupy—I have never had an office in the building—especially since the definition of my position given at that inquiry. I have always considered myself somewhat insecure. It is, I consider, a bastard position, and not compatible with that which such an officer should occupy.

2195. With regard to the appointment of the officers under you?—I have the recommendation of the officers as a rule. The system of appointments is this: Applications for appointments are filed. Each application invariably brings with it recommendations from persons who are known. These recommendations are considered, and the appointment is filled when a vacancy occurs. It is taken into consideration according to the seniority of the application. That is the general rule. Special cases may arise where the applicant is considered to be specially fitted to fill the office.

2196. These applications pass through your hands: do you examine the recommendations, and ascertain the character of the applicant as to whether he is a proper person, and equal to the work?—Invariably, if it is an Inspector's appointment. But, let me ask, am I now answering in reference to both Acts, or only to one?

2197. Confine yourself to the Sheep Act for the present?—So far as the Sheep Inspectors are concerned, I invariably examine into the qualifications of the man who seeks the appointment, to see whether he is qualified or not.

2198. Are your recommendations generally accepted?—They have been—specially since I have held the position I occupy at present—I think I might say so. I do not recollect a case to the contrary.

2199. You satisfy yourself that the appointment about to be made is a good one?—Yes.

2200. Are you satisfied that every appointment has been a good one?—All, with the exception of one. In the case of that one I called upon him to resign, when I found he was no longer a desirable man; and he was appointed under peculiar circumstances, and required a man of peculiar adaptability to carry out the duties.

2201. In the case of the Inspectors you have recommended, have they all been appointed since 1881: have none been appointed upon outside recommendations, which have not come through your hands?—None since 1881. I do not recollect any since 1881, as far as Inspectors are concerned.

2202. Do you consider that the department as it now stands in regard to the different districts is sufficiently supplied with Inspectors?—So far as Sheep Inspectors are concerned, there are one or two districts that are over-supplied, that is, supposing the disease stamped out. But for the necessity which still exists for stamping out the disease, I do not think they are over-manned at present.

2203. Then, so long as disease exists in these districts, it will be necessary to keep up an extra staff?—Yes; but I do not think that should be for a period much longer than six months, for these districts are nearly clean.

2204. You think they are all but clean?—Decidedly. Beginning at the north, there are five districts, Auckland, Wanganui, Wairarapa, Nelson, and Marlborough. Beginning with Auckland, I observe that there are no less than eight officers in that district. Poverty Bay is in the Hawke's Bay District, so that it is outside the Auckland District.

2204A. There are about six hundred scabby sheep in Auckland?—Yes; it has been the case for the last two years. Sometimes there appears to be but very few scabby sheep, but scab breaks out again.

2205. Can you account for it; it looks as if there were neglect of some kind?—I look upon it as bad management in some way. Sometime ago I recommended that the Government should hold an inquiry into the manner in which the department is carried on in Auckland.

2205A. Are you satisfied with it?—Decidedly not.

2206. You say that sometime since you recommended the Government to make inquiry: was that attended to?—No; it was not.

2207. Are you aware why not?—I cannot exactly say, but it was just at a time before the last dissolution of Parliament, and it could not be done at that time.

2208. It was quite lately, then, that you made that recommendation—only a few months ago?—Yes; I thought I had the papers on the subject with me, but I find that I have not. It would be about three or four months ago. I think I was in Auckland in June or July; it was somewhere about that time.