

2283. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] When you found that this man was incompetent, why did you send him to Nelson?—I am thoroughly prepared to answer that question. Knowing how heavily he had been handicapped,—

2284. How handicapped?—The man was going to a new country. The place was scabby from end to end when he went to the Wairarapa. He might have trusted to the information of owners; he might have missed accidentally this particular flock, and he might not be in a position to adduce proof that he was guilty of no neglect.

2285. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You said there were other flocks scabby?—There were two others, I believe; one I know of. I believe that any man might have made such a mistake. This, for certain, it was not considered wise under the circumstances to deal with him severely. He was supposed to be a good man.

2286. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] How do you mean?—He was supposed to be a good man when he went there. There was never any charge against him.

2287. Afterwards you found him at fault?—Where he was going to he would not have the local prejudice which he had to contend with where he was.

2288. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] What is that?—There was a great deal of friction. He was between two parties: there were men who had clean flocks, and men whose flocks were infected.

2289. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Has there been any feeling in the Wairarapa that Inspectors have enforced the Act unfairly in order to shut certain sheep out of the market?—I have heard it stated so. I do not think that such a charge can be laid against the Inspectors. Of course I have heard it stated so.

2290. I have put this question because it may lead to some explanation?—It has been said so, I know. I think they have used excessive caution so as to be on the safe side.

2291. We have evidence that the Inspectors attempted to stop sheep travelling from one subdivision to another, as if they were coming from an infected district into a clean district?—I know of no such case.

2292. The case I refer to is that of Mr. Meredith, who stated that Mr. Orbell tried to stop his sheep at the Ruamahunga Bridge?—There might be circumstances which would justify the Inspector in doing so; he might not be aware that they had a clean certificate.

2293. Has not your attention been drawn to that?—Not to that. I heard something about it, but my attention was not definitively brought to it. I have some recollection of Mr. Meredith writing a letter to the Government about it.

2294. Then, unless there were some special circumstances, Mr. Orbell was not justified in stopping Mr. Meredith's sheep?—They might not have a clean certificate with them. The Inspector may have been justified.

2295. Is it usual to give a certificate after sheep have been cleaned: is there anything in the Act to enable the sheepowner to demand a certificate from the Inspector?—I think so, from the fact that any owner, once his flock has been infected, must have a certificate to show that they are clean. The fact of his not holding a certificate is taken to be proof that his sheep are not clean.

2296. I want to know what clause will authorize a sheepowner after nine months, three months after dipping, to demand a certificate from the Inspector, if the Inspector cannot find scab?—Clauses 13, 14, 15, and 16 of the Act, I think, distinctly imply that he shall inspect.

*Hon. Mr. Campbell:* It is not a matter of implication when anything comes under the Act: it is an order; the Act becomes a law.

2297. *Hon. the Chairman.*] The question is whether the sheepowner can demand a clean certificate if the Inspector can find no scab?—When sheep are examined by the Inspector, and he is satisfied that they are clean, he gives a clean certificate. That has always been done. There is no power in the Act which can keep it from a man entitled to it that I can see. It is the first time it has been brought under my notice. I only heard of it once before in my life: that was in Auckland.

2298. How does the matter stand in the Wairarapa?—One of the Merediths states that the sheep were inspected by Inspector Drummond, that the Inspector could not discover scab, but he still refused to give a certificate. Application was made by him (Mr. R. R. Meredith) in this letter, which has been put in evidence, dated the 10th July, 1884, in which he says that Mr. Drummond could not find scab. [Letter read.] In reply, Mr. Meredith gets a letter from Mr. Cooper to the following effect: "I am directed to inform you that it appears to be the best way of meeting the difficulty." There is one reason why a clean certificate might not be given; or, rather, there is no reason for giving a clean certificate where sheep are lousy. In a case of that kind they used to be treated as infected.

2299. Are you aware that the whole of the flocks there were lousy more or less, and could on that ground have been declared infected. That was avoided, otherwise they would have the whole district in the infected list. What I ask is, whether that was a good reason to assign or adopt for withholding a certificate, while other flocks adjoining, which were in the same state more or less, held the certificate?—A very good reason if the Inspector was certain that he was pursuing the course for a good reason. An Inspector must in a few cases of this sort use his own judgment.

2300. What you say amounts to this: that an owner cannot demand a clean certificate for his sheep?—If he can bring proof that they are clean and that the Inspector is satisfied. The Inspector in charge ought to be master of his business. If he is satisfied the sheep are clean I do not see how he can withhold the certificate. In this case he was not satisfied, and therefore he withheld the certificate.

2301. But then you say that if he was certain he was pursuing that course for a good reason he ought to withhold it. How do you account for this, that with a dozen flocks adjoining, he did not withhold it?—These sheep must have been on the infected list: there may be many circumstances which would justify the Inspector withholding the certificate.