

The ACTING-CHAIRMAN asked if Mr. Tabart had got all the information he required, as the department was very anxious to afford all possible information. The department was quite satisfied that scab had been out of the country for two years. He would be glad to give any further information that Mr. Tabart might require.

Mr. RITCHIE said that, so far as he was concerned, as representing the department, he would take very good care that he would have a satisfactory report from the Inspectors before the *Gazette* notice appeared declaring the colony clean. He would have those reports in writing from the Inspectors, and he thought that, as they were capable and reliable men, they could very well be trusted. It might be a week or a fortnight before this was done, but when it was done he thought the other colonies might consider it quite safe.

Mr. TABART said his reason for tabling the motion was to elicit every possible information from the Chief Inspector of Stock as to the mode in which scab had been dealt with in New Zealand. His reason for doing so was—of course he spoke under correction—that he was under the belief that the Auckland Province had been declared clean, and notified to the Government of Tasmania as being clean, something like four years ago; and what he could never understand was that an outbreak had taken place in the district after it had been proclaimed clean; because they all knew that there was no such thing as spontaneous generation. Scab must have been there, and been there at the time the Proclamation was issued. He had had a great deal of experience in regard to the cleaning of different flocks of sheep in his colony, and found that the difficulty had always been to elicit from the owners of property the true state of their flocks. On one occasion, when in charge of a district, he was called upon to inspect a flock which was supposed to be clean. He inspected the sheep, and could find nothing wrong, but previous to the sheep being yarded he looked round the yards and found no grass in them. He thought it a strange circumstance where sheep were clean, or reported to be clean. He also discovered traces of tobacco having been used. The owner of the property afterwards asked if he (Mr. Tabart) was pleased with the inspection, and he replied, "Certainly not." The owner then said, "Why not?" and he replied, "I will communicate my opinion to the Chief Inspector of Stock." A few days afterwards he (Mr. Tabart) returned and told the owner that he wanted to look at his sheep. The owner said, "Shall I bring them in for you?" and he replied, "I would prefer riding over the run myself." He (Mr. Tabart) had not gone far before he found that the sheep he had inspected were mixed up with scabby sheep. Now, is it not probable that the same thing might occur in New Zealand, particularly in such districts as Marlborough and Nelson? His idea was that in provinces like those, where there were so many scabby sheep, the Chief Inspector should, before declaring the colony clean, concentrate all the Inspectors, and have a simultaneous inspection; for he knew that stock-owners were very chary about allowing an inspection of their sheep when they were doubtful as to their condition. He had listened to the statement given by the Chief Inspector of Stock for New Zealand, and he only hoped that his expectations would be realised.

The ACTING-CHAIRMAN asked if they were to infer from Mr. Tabart's remarks that he was not altogether satisfied that the colony had been cleaned.

Mr. TABART said he certainly thought there should be a concentration of Inspectors, so as to get simultaneous inspection as far as possible. They had the fact that Auckland had been proclaimed clean in 1887, and that this was followed by an outbreak two years afterwards.

The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said it amounted to this: that Mr. Tabart would not be prepared to recommend his Government to declare the colony clean unless some such steps as he had indicated were taken.

Mr. TABART replied that that was what he meant.

The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said it remained for Mr. Ritchie to decide what steps he should advise the Government to take in the direction indicated. But he assumed from what Mr. Tabart had said that, if those steps were taken and a clean certificate given, he would then be prepared to recommend that the restrictions be removed.

Mr. TABART said it struck him that from the information given it had only been clean twelve months.

Mr. RITCHIE said they had been taken off the infected list since June, 1890, so that virtually all the sheep were clean since that date. By the *Gazette* notice it would be seen that there were none in June, 1890; none in June, 1891; and none in June, 1892. With regard to the Miranda sheep, there were only some two or three hundred, and he was perfectly certain from Mr. Clifton's report that everything was right there. With reference to the Marlborough sheep, it was a rougher country, and partly unstocked. He had given special instructions to the Inspector to go up there while the shearing and mustering were going on. The last inspection was made by an entirely different man. He did not want to do anything before it was perfectly safe, but he was quite willing to take any steps the Conference wished him to take.

Mr. COLEMAN PHILLIPS said the Coromandel district was a goldmining and sawmilling district—not a sheep-farming district at all. There happened to be turned out some years ago eight or ten Lincoln sheep that got into the bush. These sheep came out, and were taken over to this flock at Miranda. He did not remember Auckland having been scabby before. It was a very minor matter.

Mr. RITCHIE understood that Mr. Tabart proposed to take the date from 1891.

Mr. TABART said that was so.

The ACTING-CHAIRMAN asked if he was right in assuming that, in the event of the Sheep Department taking steps to see that the country was clean between now and January next—in the event of this work being done for which Mr. Tabart stipulated, and no further scab being found—he was prepared to recommend his Government to remove the embargo from New Zealand sheep as from January, 1893.

Mr. TABART hoped they would not think he was too persistent about this matter. He wished to see the whole thing cleared up. This matter of scab was very important to his colony, for if