

down the thistles; that this arrangement on the part of the proprietors did not reach the ears of the Inspector, who sent in his usual bill for payment; that when inquiry was made it was discovered that the tenant had destroyed all the thistles—and that consequently the Thistle Inspector had never visited the spot that season. Do you think that a case of hardship?—I do not consider it a case of hardship, because there is no such provision in the Ordinance. I can state, as a proprietor of land at the North Shore, that I entered into a similar arrangement with the Inspector myself.

*Mr. Gillies.*

2nd August, 1870.

Surely it is an abuse that a person holding office as Inspector should enter into a contract to eradicate thistles for a certain sum annually?—I cannot see it.

*Mr. Creighton.*] Have the thistles in the Province of Auckland been eradicated?—I believe so, but I say at once that in my opinion a Thistle Ordinance is of no use.

*Mr. Farmer.*] Take the Native district of Oraki, where there are many thistles; do you not think that the Native proprietors should be liable to be fined for allowing thistles to seed on their lands?—I do not. Assuming that it is the opinion of the majority of the people that there should be a Thistle Act, there is no oppression in enforcing it. If it is said to be oppressive in respect to the Natives, you might as well say that it is oppressive to have a law in the North Island for the recovery of debts, because you cannot enforce it against the Natives. It is no oppression that a man should be made to pay a just debt while others do not or cannot be made to pay. I think the Act should be repealed because it is impossible to work it; but I do not think that is a matter upon which my private opinion should be the guide, but the opinion of the people of the Province, who are best able to judge.

*Mr. Farmer.*] At Remuera and Panmure, where there are thistles on the Government reserve, do you not think it oppressive that Mr. McLean should be compelled to keep down the thistles on his land?—I know an analogous case. The Mount Eden Highway Board asked for powers under the Thistle Ordinance, and obtained them. They eradicated the thistles there, and so ought all the Highway Boards to do.

But I am talking of a hardship in a case where Government land adjoins a man's property?—It is a hardship; but it is not a hardship arising from the law. It would have been very easy in the reserve referred to, to have cut down the thistles before they went to seed. The Thistle Act is not in force throughout the Province, but only in districts where the Highway Trustees ask that it may be brought into operation.

*The Chairman.*] Do you think it advisable that, in a matter in which all participate, such as thistles, one Province should have a Thistle Ordinance in force, while an adjacent Province has repealed its Ordinance because it found it impossible to carry it out?—I do not see that those who are more enlightened, and wish to let the thistles grow, can be injured by the others; the injury would be the other way.

Mr. Carrington was examined, and stated—

I am Member for Omata, in the Province of Taranaki. I am also Superintendent of the Province. There is a Thistle Ordinance in Taranaki. It has not been repealed, but is in force, and it has been acted on to my sorrow. It is stringently enforced against the Europeans, but not against the Natives. I have spoken against the Thistle Ordinance for many years—long before I had anything to do with politics. The working of the Ordinance is very oppressive. I will give a case in point. I had a small section of about fifty acres of land on the Egmont Road, ten acres of which were cleared of bush. The Thistle Ordinance was then under the management of the police. Sergeant Dunn came to me, and told me that there were thistles upon the ten acres, and that I must clear them. I said it had better be done, and asked him what it would cost. He replied that the expense would be £5. I expressed my astonishment at so large a sum being required to clear ten acres, and he said that if I did not have it done at once it would cost me £10. I told him it was disgusting, but he might make the best bargain he could for me, and I would sell the land as soon as possible. I sold it, in consequence, for a quarter of its value. I have remonstrated with various authorities against the Ordinance for many years, urging that I had read in the Royal Agricultural Society's works that the thistle was a great advantage to the land, and would exhaust itself in a few years. On the banks of the River Waitara a block of land, a mile in length by nearly a quarter of a mile in depth, was so covered with a waving mass of thistles at one time, that a man could not ride through them. Precisely as I told them, that land is now covered with a beautiful sward, the thistles having effected their own cure. In my opinion, the Thistle Ordinances ought to be repealed.

*Mr. Carrington.*

2nd August, 1870.

Mr. Macandrew was examined, and stated—

I am Member for the Clutha, in the Province of Otago, and also Superintendent of the Province. There was a Thistle Ordinance in that Province, but it is now repealed. I believe that the principal reason why it was repealed was that it was found to be inoperative, and that it was impossible to keep the thistles down under it. We found that it was very unfair, unless we could keep the thistles down upon the Crown Land. That was my great reason for the repeal. I was a party to its repeal, in consequence of my deeming it unfair that parties possessing land should be compelled to eradicate their thistles, when there was no means of keeping them down on adjacent lands. The Province of Otago has probably expended thousands in trying to eradicate them from the Crown lands, but it was found to be utterly impossible to do so, and therefore the Ordinance was repealed. The hardship I have referred to was almost universal. During the latter part of the time when the Ordinance was in force, the police were constantly supplied with notices under the Ordinance, by which action might have been taken, and in several cases was taken. The result was that people in one or two instances were fined. Such an Ordinance must, from its nature, be oppressive. I may say that besides the Crown lands, a great many of the roads are covered with thistles.

*Mr. Macandrew.*

2nd August, 1870.

Mr. Curtis was examined, and stated—

I am Member for the City of Nelson, and Superintendent of the Province. We have no Thistle Ordinance now. There was an Ordinance passed in 1859, which was amended in 1861, and repealed altogether in 1865. It was repealed because it was found impossible to carry out its provisions. There

*Mr. Curtis.*

2nd August, 1870.