

270. You have said that Inspectors were removed when it was considered necessary to remove them in the interests of the settlers. If no complaint came to the department against Telford, and he had carried out all the wishes of the department as they had been communicated to him, what led you to believe that it would be in the interests of the settlers that he should be removed?—Nothing led me to believe that. It was the Colonial Secretary who acted.

271. Had any resolutions been passed reflecting on the Inspector?—The settlers complained that scab was not eradicated in the Wairarapa, and there was a general feeling of dissatisfaction, though nobody was blamed individually.

272. *Hon. Mr. Dick.*] You say there was a public meeting at Wairarapa in reference to the spread of scab. Mr. Telford was at that time Inspector there, was he not?—Yes.

273. And what was the result of the public meeting?—The persons who got up the meeting were informed that the Government had taken measures.

274. Do you know whether a deputation came from the Wairarapa to see the Government on the subject?—Yes, I was present at the meeting between the deputation and the Minister. That deputation was the result of the meeting which was held at the Wairarapa. The deputation came to complain that scab was not eradicated in the Wairarapa, and brought down with them the resolutions passed at the meeting.

275. Was the question of Mr. Telford's fitness for his office talked about?—It was not; but there was a complaint made that the Act of 1878 had been so long in force and yet scab had not been eradicated, and I presume that the Government then thought it would be advisable that a change should take place.

276. With reference to the office work, what position do you hold in the office?—I am Private Secretary to the member of the Government who administers the Act.

277. And he gives you directions when you hand him papers?—Yes.

278. Do you sign all the correspondence, or does the Under-Secretary do so?—If the Minister wants information I sign the papers, but if directions or instructions are to be given the Under-Secretary signs. Mr. Cooper always signs directions except when I receive instructions from the Minister to do so.

279. Do you hand the papers to Mr. Cooper?—He sees all the papers that are connected with the details of the department.

280. Have you a set of letter-books for the Stock Branch?—No, the letters are all copied into the Colonial Secretary's books.

281. Then, any letters that you or Mr. Cooper may sign are copied into the Colonial Secretary's books?—Yes.

282. Mr. Bayly was appointed Superintending Inspector a few months ago?—He was.

283. You seem to think that his department is separate from yours?—No, I understand that Mr. Bayly has the outdoor work of the Stock Branch of the Colonial Secretary's Office, which is to see that the Inspectors do their work properly, to recommend appointments and removals, &c.

284. You think, then, that Mr. Bayly is in no way connected with you?—I consider he is not.

285. Nor with Mr. Cooper?—Mr. Cooper could answer that question better himself.

286. Do your duties clash in any way?—No.

287. If Mr. Bayly considers it necessary to recommend certain alterations in reference to the Inspectors, have you anything to do with it?—Nothing at all; that is what we call "outdoor work."

288. Suppose Mr. Bayly has to prepare a report for the Government or the House, have you anything to do with that report?—Nothing whatever.

289. Then your idea is that Mr. Bayly occupies an entirely separate position?—Yes; he has to see that the Sheep and Rabbit Acts are efficiently carried out.

290. And he can give you no instructions?—I should take none from him. I should take instructions from the Minister and Mr. Cooper only.

291. *Mr. W. C. Buchanan.*] Can you make any statement to show the state of the scab disease in the Wairarapa from 1878 up to the time when Mr. Telford was removed?—The returns can all be seen at the office, but I can say that there was a great decrease in the number of scabby sheep in the Wairarapa between 1878 and 1881.

292. You mean while Mr. Telford was in charge of the district?—Scab was diminishing, but it was breaking out in fresh places when he was removed.

293. Can you explain to us Mr. Telford's statement that, in the district to which he was transferred in 1878, the sheep were all supposed to be clean in 1881?—I cannot say anything about the matter without first looking up the returns.

294. *Mr. J. Green.*] Did Mr. Telford ever ask permission to be allowed to destroy some sheep in a certain portion of bush land, on the ground that those sheep were scabby, and that the disease was likely to spread?—He requested the Government to employ a man to take wild sheep off Crown lands.

295. And did he warn the Government that, if these sheep were not destroyed, there was a probability of the disease spreading?—Yes.

296. Then, if Mr. Telford gave that advice to the Government, and they declined to accept it, the consequence being that the disease spread, can Mr. Telford be blamed?—Yes; because he did not think it necessary to enforce the Act to prevent sheep from straying.

297. But if the sheep were on Crown lands, and he did not know the owner, how could he enforce the Act?—The thirtieth section of the Act gives him power to compel the owners of sheep, whose sheep stray on Crown lands, to destroy them.

298. Could he have done more than he did in warning the Government, if he were not aware of the names of the owners of the sheep?—The matter was dealt with by the Minister, and Mr. Telford was informed that it would be impolitic to remove sheep at the public cost from the Crown lands so long as the property of the neighbouring owners was not fenced. It was offering a premium to settlers to allow their sheep to stray.

299. But if Mr. Telford could not ascertain the names of the owners of these sheep?—He did not give notice to the neighbouring owners whose land was unfenced that they should keep their sheep on their own properties.