

2209. Since the present Government came into office, have you recommended that?—I have had no opportunity as yet.

2210. I do not understand you?—I have been laid up for three weeks.

2211. Will you say in what respect you are dissatisfied with the working of the Sheep Act in Auckland?—There the flocks are so small, but there are a great many of them, and they require constant watching. I have travelled over the country myself, and I think, if the Act were carried out by proper officers in a proper manner, there is no reason why the district should not be cleaned, especially when the reason assigned for the frequent breaking-out of scab is that it occurs through diseased sheep from Wanganui. That was a good reason very often, but it has passed away. It is true that for several years Wanganui was a depôt for scab, but that is so no longer.

2212. I suppose that every sheep introduced by sea would be inspected?—Yes; but I found that steamers were carrying Government brands, and used to brand the sheep themselves in transit.

2213. What, do you mean private steamers?—Yes; private steamers.

2214. How?—They were supplied with them.

2214A. Who supplied them?—They supplied themselves.

2215. Did you take steps to stop it?—I did. I found it out by accident. Sheep were taken up to Auckland from Waitara.

2216. But they ought to be clean on leaving Waitara, for Taranaki has been clean?—These were Wanganui sheep.

2217. Do I understand you that they were branded after they got aboard the vessel. How did they get there, let me ask you first?—By railway from Hawera. I think you will find that at that time it was part of the same district. At the present time there is an Inspector placed at Waitara. He was removed to that place from New Plymouth. He was instructed to see that the Act was properly carried out.

2218. In coming from Wanganui they came from an infected district into a clean district?—I think it will be found that Taranaki was infected for a long, long time, and still is infected.

2218A. I am speaking as to the present time?—It is still allowed to be an infected district; if it were declared a clean district that would simply stop the whole of the trade with Auckland.

2218B. As far as I can see from the reports Taranaki is a clean district?—It used to be a portion of the Wellington District.

2219. There are no infected sheep in the New Plymouth District?—Only since 1881 or 1880—the beginning of 1881.

2220. I am speaking of the present time: I was asking you what happens?—The sheep are taken through; they are inspected by an Inspector; every sheep is inspected and branded before going to Auckland.

2221. What are the steps taken?—I believe they are inspected in Wanganui, and their departure telegraphed to the Waitara Inspector.

2222. They are not dipped?—No.

2223. But going from an infected district they are bound to be dipped?—Certainly; at Auckland, on arrival; but it would stop the whole, or a greater portion, of the mutton supply to Auckland were they dipped before shipment. In sheep going through by rail there would not be the danger of infecting sheep passing along the road, but the trucks, I suppose, would be likely to introduce scab. Since an Inspector has been placed at Waitara there has been a close supervision.

2224. But to return to the Auckland District. You seem to think that scab was introduced from Wanganui. That is now not the case?—I am positively certain that it does not go through now.

2225. How do you account for the continuance of scab in Auckland, which has had more inspection than other places?—I can find no reason for it, except that matters are not properly conducted there. In one quarter we see a number of flocks, in the next quarter there are different flocks.

2226. That will apply not only to Auckland but to Marsden and other subdivisions?—In Marsden great alterations have been made since the present Inspector was placed at Whangarei. I think the disease has been almost stamped out there.

2227. The evidence we had yesterday went to show that the flocks are very small—not exceeding from fifty to one hundred sheep; that these sheep are easily cleaned; but the curious thing about it is that, within a month or two afterwards, in some other flock of about the same size, scab will break out as if coming from a distance away?—It must be admitted that a lot of the Auckland country is difficult. Where there is a number of these small holders the difficulty is great. The country is very rough in some places, and some places are very difficult of access, which is very often only by water. The flocks vary from ten to two hundred sheep. Constant supervision is necessary, and it takes a good deal of time to travel the distances. These small owners have an opportunity of moving their sheep backwards and forwards by water, so that they escape observation.

2228. You mean that they can move their sheep without giving notice or getting any leave to move?—Yes; it would require a tremendous service to meet all these contingencies. That is one of the reasons why scab frequently breaks out in those isolated places.

2229. Do you not think that, in carrying out the Act as it stands, you could stamp it out?—The only thing necessary is constant and close supervision. I think that, under the Act as it stands, it might be stamped out in Auckland.

2230. What are your instructions: to carry out the Act strictly, or to use discretion in any way?—There are the instructions at the end of the Act.

2231. Perhaps you can state what they are?—They are to carry out the Act.

2232. In its integrity?—Yes. Allow me to hand in the circular to Inspectors, dated the 18th September, 1883. [Circular put in and read.]

2233. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.* What document is that?—The circular sent by me to the Inspectors.

2234. *Hon. the Chairman.* I gather from this that you intended the Inspectors should lay informations whenever there were any breaches of the Act?—Yes.