

2235. Are you satisfied that the Inspectors have done so?—I have heard of nothing to the contrary—nothing to the contrary has come to my knowledge.

2236. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] But you do not think they have done so?—I imagine it has not been done in all cases; there is no particular case that I can mention.

2237. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What is your opinion as to its having been done or not?—I do not know of any instance where it has not been done.

2238. We have evidence that the Inspector in Auckland allows a ram to run with small flocks because, as he states it, he considers there is no danger of the infection spreading, but in large flocks he thinks it would be quite wrong for a ram so to run with them. He mentioned that he considered he had a certain amount of discretion in a matter of that sort. Do you consider that was a right view of the case?—It was a decidedly wrong view of the case.

2239. Do you think that allowing rams to run with these small flocks in this way may be one cause why scab continues to exist?—Yes; because the infected ram may be bought by a neighbour, and the flock he comes out of is not known to the Inspector until after he has gone.

2240. If the farmer were to breed from his ewes, do you think he would take the same trouble as if they were not allowed to breed?—I do not think he would; it is, in fact, against the law.

2241. There are instances?—I do not know whether breeding rams would not be better, but, if a man is precluded from putting in his rams, he can, in any event, put in foreign stock. It is admitted that lambs are difficult to muster, and consequently may retard operations in cleaning a station. But, on the other hand, we have several instances where sheep brought on an infected station, having taken the infection, have scabbed a large area of country in endeavouring to make back to where they were brought from. It is, therefore, questionable which of the two evils is the greater. Auckland is a specially dangerous country,

2242. May that arise from the nature of the fencing?—Yes, it is so; but Auckland is a peculiar place in itself.

2243. Posts and rails are what they use?—Yes; besides it is a humid climate, and scab will exist there longer.

2244. What do you suggest in regard to the cure of scab in Auckland?—I think the first thing is that an inquiry should be held.

2245. You would trust to that inquiry to point out what should be done as regards the management?—Yes.

2246. *Hon. the Chairman.*] With regard to Wanganui, was not that place clean about three years ago?—It was reported clean, but it was found to the contrary. One Inspector was dismissed through what was the actual state of the district; another was removed.

2247. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] What man is that?—Mr. McKenzie was removed.

2248. He is just walking about the street here?—He is employed here to watch the dipping of sheep.

2249. In Wellington?—Yes; he is quite fit for that: he receives £200 a year.

2250. He is a perfectly competent man?—There was no charge made against him: he was not charged with inefficiency.

2251. *Mr. Richardson.*] He has charge of a district: he was in Wairarapa?—He was in Wellington. I moved him to Wanganui. He was holding the same position except that he had a larger district. There used to be also a sort of cadet, so that when he was in the country some one would be looking after the port.

2252. Has he improved the state of things in Wanganui?—He has stamped it out, with the exception of one or two places outside.

2253. With regard to the work done by Inspectors you must, to a certain extent, judge by results?—Yes, by results. They have their diaries, which are presumed to contain an actual statement of the work done.

2254. Do you think that he is thoroughly competent and has done his work thoroughly well since he has been in Wanganui?—I am perfectly satisfied.

2255. You are satisfied, perfectly: do you think that district will soon be clean?—I hope that, by the end of the quarter, if not perfectly clean, there will not be a scabby sheep to be seen throughout the district. The whole district has been worked systematically, and inspected from end to end. Owing to this systematic treatment, although I cannot say it is perfectly clean, yet I am positive it has been stamped out as far as that treatment has gone.

2256. Do you require the Inspectors to visit the flocks?—Yes; it is my instructions that they shall inspect every flock: that they do not wait until scab breaks out, but that they shall visit every flock in their district regularly.

2257. Are these regulations in force now?—They are, I suppose; they have always been in force.

2258. Take this one—18: "It is the first and most important duty of an Inspector to detect the existence of scab on its first outbreak: he should keep a systematic system of inspection in his district." Has that been carried out?—My distinct instructions have been that that should be carried out vigilantly.

2258a. With regard to Wairarapa, there has been a large increase of scab in that district?—Yes; I cannot exactly say how long since, but it is within eighteen months.

2259. How do you account for it: the fact of there being scab there which was not known—the Inspector was not aware of its existence—where did it exist?—It existed in Mr. Meredith's flocks, for one place; I know that for a fact. If you wish I will detail the circumstances. I shall have to go into other matters in explaining. Shortly after taking charge—Mr. Sutton was in charge of the South Wairarapa Subdivision—there were continual complaints made that the Act was not administered in the manner that it should be. These complaints were coming down to me without any specific charge against the Inspector. Especially on one occasion there were three or four of