

these complaints came down at one time. In consequence of this I wrote to Mr. Sutton to the effect that charges had been made that the administration of the Sheep Act was not conducted in the manner it should be; that he was to hold himself disengaged on a certain day, when I should go up to Wairarapa and make inquiries. So I went up; but no one appeared to substantiate or prove any charge against the Inspector. It was plain, from the friction that existed in Wairarapa—the continual meetings for and against the Inspector—that it was impossible he could do any business. I suggested that he should be removed to Nelson. I did not think it expedient to move him at once, because it would have placed him in the position of one against whom charges had been made and proved, whereas there was nothing proved against him. I determined that he should remain, in order to ascertain some further facts. Shortly afterwards I received a letter enclosing wool scab, and a map of the district, stating that if I would go to a certain run in a certain place I would find sheep that were actually in that condition. I went to this place, taking the Inspector with me. I never mentioned to any one what I was informed of until we got to the place. I found that what was stated was the fact. I placed Drummond in charge of that portion of the district, with instructions to inspect the whole of the sheep in that portion one after the other. I believe that if the date is looked up there is a letter on record relating to this; and if the lists are compared it will be found that a great number of sheep were discovered to be scabby in that place. I then thought that Inspector Sutton should be moved, and I recommended that he be removed to Nelson. He refused to go. These are the reasons why I say that I am sure there was a sudden outbreak of scab occurred at a certain time in the Wairarapa District, through sheep being infected which were unknown to the Government.

2260. You say there were indefinite charges made against Mr. Sutton?—Yes.

2261. Who made the charges?—I do not know, with the exception of the one in question, when a letter was sent to me.

2262. You must have known?—I know that there were charges of an indefinite character: Was it not your duty to have followed them up. To put it to you in this way: If you hear a person say that such an Inspector is not doing his work, would you have thought it your duty to act upon that?—No; it is not allowed by the Civil Service Regulations.

2263. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] The Civil Service Regulations! what are they against the provisions of the Act?—It is not by hearing a person say off-hand that such a man should be indicted that you would have sufficient to act upon.

*Hon. Mr. Campbell:* Indicted: we are not speaking of indictments, but of the reason why the Act has not been carried out.

2264. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You must have had them in some form that you could lay hold of?—It was necessary to have something tangible upon which I could act. It was from Mr. Beetham personally that I heard of it—that was, verbally. The other was the letter I have mentioned. It was upon Mr. Beetham's statement that I wrote the letter to the Inspector conveying what I have already said.

2265. What we want to come to is this: You acted as if there had been specific charges made against Mr. Sutton. Did you know by whom they were made, for you could in fairness have called on the person to prove them, and enabled Mr. Sutton to reply?—There was no specific charge.

2266. Then, why did you go to Masterton in order to make inquiries?—I went to give an opportunity to those people who were making complaints to substantiate their complaints.

2267. Who were these people?—Some of them were the persons by whom letters were sent down. Mr. Beetham was the person who spoke to me on the subject.

2268. Do you think that the course you adopted was the right course to take?—I did under the circumstances. It gave an opportunity of bringing specific charges, if they could do so.

2269. Do you understand my meaning: it seems to me that you may have been perfectly right in making inquiries, but it seems to me that, in intimating that there were charges made against Mr. Sutton, it was surely your duty to see that you had these charges in black and white?—The charges were not specifically against Mr. Sutton, they were generally against the manner of working the Sheep Act in the Wairarapa. It was to give an opportunity to persons to make distinct charges that I took the course I did.

2270. It was necessary for you to have distinct charges, otherwise you could not go into anything?—It was simply to inquire into the whole matter, that would give an opportunity to every person to lay a distinct charge if he wished.

2271. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] At all events, you gave him an opportunity of complaining that a charge was made against him by the department and not substantiated?—No, I did not.

2272. You know that he does complain of that?—Yes; that I am aware of.

2273. You did go to Masterton to make inquiries?—Yes.

2274. And you afterwards removed Mr. Sutton?—I did.

2275. On what grounds?—On the grounds I have related.

2276. What did you inform him?—I do not think I informed him of anything further than that it was expedient to move him to Nelson.

2277. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You consider that any Inspector is liable to removal at any time?—Yes, at any moment, if it is deemed necessary by the Government. If he has any complaint he can make it, but obey orders he must.

2278. In Mr. Sutton's case he was a married man?—Yes.

2279. Was his removal sudden?—He was given three weeks.

2280. You do not consider that he was unnecessarily hurried?—No; it was not so far that he had to go to.

2281. Then, you considered that there was a large amount of scab in the district?—Yes; I found one lot myself. There were others found; I think Elder's was one.

2282. Your impression is that scab existed there actually before?—It must have been so, for the few that I saw must have been infected three or four months.