

his neighbour the boundary may be no better between them than between the separate flocks. Yet the neighbour is allowed to sell, and he is not allowed to sell, although the danger is no greater with him than with the neighbour.

2411. Will you mention the clauses in the Act that are referred to?—It is suggested that, in the interpretation clause, the word “run” should be expunged, and the word “flock” substituted. “Flock to mean and include any sheep such as the owner shall be in the habit of having shepherded in one flock, or depasturing in one paddock or enclosure, and separated from other sheep by a sheep-proof fence or secure natural boundary.” There was also a suggestion as to the definition of “infected sheep” and “infected flock.” There is one amendment proposed about branding.

2412. First comes clause 13 : clause 20, what do you say to that?—It is thought in the district that a colour would be the best for branding.

2413. The following is the 20th section : “The Inspector of each district shall have a brand not similar to any one already registered hereafter, called an ‘official brand,’ which shall be registered by him in the General Register of Brands Department, in the office of the Chief Registrar of Brands of the district wherein is situated the said Chief Inspector’s office, and shall also be similarly registered in the General Register of Brands of every brand registration district forming part of or adjoining the aforesaid Chief Inspector’s district. The official brand of any Chief Inspector shall be used exclusively by all Inspectors within such Chief Inspector’s district, in such manner as may be appointed by this Act, or by direction of the Chief Inspector of the district.” The amendment you propose is that the Chief Inspector shall register a distinctive colour, with which all infected sheep shall be branded. Any person using such colour without authority to be subject to a penalty?—The Chief Inspector brands with the letter S in red pigment. The letter S, according to the present mode, is indistinct. It becomes a mere blotch on long-woolled sheep; you cannot tell whether it is an S or not. If a distinctive colour were substituted, it would be more easy to tell what sheep were infected. Nearly all people brand with red colour.

2414. You say that most people in your district brand with red?—Yes; even in infected districts nearly all brand with red. The colour to be chosen would not matter so long as it could be easily distinguished. The main thing is protection from your neighbour’s scabby sheep. The following amendment is proposed to clause 25 : “Every owner of any infected sheep shall, as soon as practicable, cause the same to be distinctly wool-branded on the back with the colour registered by the Chief Inspector for that purpose, and such colour shall from time to time be renewed as occasion shall require, so that the same shall be distinctly recognizable.

2415. The Act at present provides that the infected sheep shall be distinctly wool-branded by the owner on the back with the letter S?—We propose that he shall wool-brand with the colour registered by the Chief Inspector, and that it shall be renewed as occasion may require. The letter S is utterly unreliable as an indication that the sheep are infected. Then, in the case of a man having the infection in one small spot or portion of his flock, it seems hard that he should be unable to sell his sheep from a separate flock or paddock. Supposing it to be near lambing time, he should be able to sell, to make room for his lambs, if he is fenced properly.

2416. Do you not think it is a dangerous thing to introduce separate flocks?—No; it is just as dangerous for your neighbour to sell from a run adjoining an infected flock. The complaint against the present system is that it is tying a man up so that he cannot do anything to make room for his lambs. As to removal, I thought it best that a guarantee should be given that they were going for the purpose of being slaughtered, but the committee overruled me, and said they ought to go any way. There was the case of a person who was allowed to cut his run up. Of course the sheep were carefully picked over. Three months after, he is allowed to sell all his sheep.

2417. Because it was a separate run?—Because it was a separate run. This shows what a farce the thing is the way it is now. These sheep actually went to be fattened on a neighbour’s run. The Act points out the duty of the owner, and what is to be done, but unfortunately every district has persons who will not do their duty. The committee also suggest an amendment to section 29.

2418. That clause relates to an owner who has several flocks depasturing on the same run, and only one is infected?—Yes. The committee suggest the following amendment : “When any owner shall have several flocks of sheep depasturing upon any run, and one of such flocks shall become infected, it shall not be lawful for such owner to remove any sheep from any such flock for a period of three calendar months after he shall have obtained a clean certificate for such flock, unless with the written permission of the Inspector upon each occasion of removal, and unless such sheep shall be dipped under the supervision and to the satisfaction of an Inspector.” They also propose the following amendment to section 32 : “No clean certificate shall be given to the owner of any infected flock until the Inspector shall have satisfied himself, by examination, or by the declaration of the owner, that the adjacent flock or flocks on his run are free from disease.”

2419. That is also in connection with this point?—Yes; it all hinges on the one point of having flocks on one run. There is a further amendment proposed. In the present Act the Inspector may or may not give a clean certificate at all. There is no power to compel him to do so.

2420. Have you ever known it withheld?—Yes; there is a case now in the Wairarapa in which it is held in abeyance. The Inspector said he would not grant it because the sheep were lousy; but, if it goes to that, nearly every sheep in the district is lousy, more or less. The certificate is held upon that excuse in abeyance. Why are not all certificates cancelled for lousy flocks?

2421. Who is the Inspector in your district?—Mr. John Drummond, a very good man indeed. We do not know who is to blame for the maladministration of the Act.

2422. You mentioned that he was a very good man : have you considered whether there may not be good reason for withholding it?—He is a good man in a yard, or for detection of scab. I am not a party aggrieved, but I know a good number of people feel aggrieved. The amendment