

2570. *Mr. Dodson.*] You occasionally have little difficulties in the department, through having to consult the Minister of Lands relative to the waste country—the “no man’s land”?—I did not say that. I have not been examined on that point.

2571. You think at all events that a beneficial change would take place if the department were put under the Minister of Lands?—Yes; I do think that.

2572. I presume that was your reason?—No; that was not altogether the reason. It was thought it would be advisable that the Minister of Lands should have all departments connected with land under his control.

2573. You have not had any difficulty thrown in your way by the Lands Department in attempting to clean this country?—No; there has been no difficulty thrown in the way.

2574. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Would there not be delays in passing backwards and forwards to the department, having to refer to the Lands Department and get their replies?—Not if the Lands Department took charge of the Stock Department. We should wash our hands of it altogether. The Colonial Secretary would have nothing to do with it.

2575. I mean as it now stands?—We have no communication with the Lands Department, except occasionally to ask a question.

2576. Have you not to refer certain questions to the Lands Department?—Very rarely; and we always get prompt action when we do. That is not a cause of delay at all.

2577. *Mr. Dodson.*] This Clarence country has been recognized by the department as exceptionally difficult to clean—the case in which the remission of fines took place?—Yes. It was represented that, in order to clean the country effectually, some number of miles of fencing would require to be put up; and that, if the owner of the run were called upon to pay the £700 fine, he would be without the means of putting up the fence, and therefore without the means to clean the run. He had not only to put up these miles of fencing—seven miles, I think—but also to dip forty thousand sheep.

2578. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] To avoid paying the fine he has to have the sheep cleaned?—He is allowed to keep the money, to use it to put up the fence and dip his sheep. If he produces a clean certificate, the bond will not be pressed; if he does not, the bond will be put in suit.

2579. *Mr. Dodson.*] There is some correspondence which has taken place about a road: has not Mr. Ward asked the department to endeavour to get him a road through some of Mr. Bullen’s country? Has that come before the department?—It has not been in my office. It would be with the Crown Lands Department. If he required to take the land compulsorily, it would go before the Public Works Minister.

2580. Then, you would not know about that?—No; I do not know at all.

2581. *Mr. Lance.*] I understood you to say that the Inspector’s opinion was generally asked before the fines were remitted?—Yes; I believe so.

2582. Mr. Foster says he was not asked. This is an extract from his evidence: “Q. Upon whose recommendation were the penalties remitted? A. I am not sure, except as regards the extract I have read in answering Mr. Gibson’s petition. Q. You were not consulted? A. I was not consulted in this matter. Q. You were not consulted prior to the fines being remitted? A. No.” He is very precise?—I do not know about that.

2583. Mr. Foster is a Sub-Inspector, and he says that he considers that when he brings an information in the Magistrate’s Court then his business is over, and he has nothing to do with collecting the fines?—Nothing whatever. His duty is ended when he goes out of Court.

2584. Here are two adjoining properties—Ingles’s and Gibson’s. In one case a fine has been inflicted and paid; in the other a fine has been inflicted and remitted?—Yes.

2585. Do you know any reason why Mr. Ingles’s fine should not be remitted?—I would not say the fine should be remitted, but I do not know why he should not be treated in the same way as the other man.

2586. I forget what the fine was: £150 I think?—Yes.

2587. Of course he thinks it a very great hardship. He had to buy fencing like Gibson or any one else. I wanted to know whether there was any cause why he should not be put on the same footing as Mr. Gibson?—I do not know why there should be a difference between them. In Mr. Gibson’s case the thing was done without any trouble, while Mr. Ingles gave all the trouble he could.

2588. He fought the department inch by inch?—For my part I do not think that any reason why he should be treated differently, but other people might.

2589. *Mr. Lance.*] Have you heard that this bond which Mr. Gibson has given to the Government is likely to be enforced?—I have not heard anything about it. I have no doubt it will be enforced after the time stated if his sheep are not clean.

2590. *Mr. Dodson.*] Does the department look upon the bond as a mode of payment: a commercial man looks upon it in that light, and enforces it in due course?—If the conditions are fulfilled—if this fencing which he undertook to put up is put up, and if he produces a clean certificate, then we tear up the bond.

2591. Then, his case will be considered at that time?—Yes.

2592. That is a part of the bond?—No; there is no condition in the bond: it is an unconditional bond. It could be put in a suit to-morrow without asking any questions.

2593. *Hon. the Chairman.*] If he cleans his run, spends money upon it, and obtains a clean certificate, that will be taken into account, and the propriety of remitting the bond will then be considered?—Yes.

2594. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] On the removal of an Inspector or Sub-Inspector, is he entitled to any compensation for being removed?—If he is removed from one district to another district, at the same rate of salary, he is entitled to the expenses of his removal.

2595. Supposing he is dismissed altogether?—If he is dismissed from any fault of his own he is not entitled to anything; but if from no fault of his own, not from incapacity, but for the good of the service, then he is entitled to compensation.