

2790. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Has the captain committed forgery?—No; he did not commit forgery.

2791. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you know whether it mentioned whose sheep they were, what was the character of them, or if he left the number?—He left the number; he signed it in blank; he left the number of the certificate with his agent.

2792. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Do you think he should have been dismissed at once?—I recommended that his services should be dispensed with, and that Mr. Price, who took his place, should be retained.

2793. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Did he leave blank certificates for the purpose with his agent?—This was signed in blank,

2794. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Why were his services not dispensed with?—I cannot tell.

2795. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Can you explain at what date this took place?—The dates are there in the correspondence.

2796. Within what time has it been?—It is about twelve months ago; rather more than twelve months ago.

2797. *Captain Russell.*] What is the date given in the correspondence?—March 13, 1882.

2798. *Hon. the Chairman.*] It is some considerable time ago?—I accidentally heard it, and inquired into the matter.

2799. And you ascertained that the Inspector gave certificates in blank, and allowed the captain of the vessel to brand on board his steamer?—He did not allow the captain to do it. The captain did not do it; but the Inspector signed the certificates in blank, and allowed the branding to take place on board the ship.

2800. When was that?—Some little time over two years ago.

2801. When did you find that out?—When I was coming down the other coast.

2802. I want to know what date?—It would be sometime in November, 1882—either October or November, 1882.

2803. What course did you then take?—I wrote to Mr. Hatley, and asked him to remove to Waitara, but in the meantime the matter became complicated, to a certain extent, by his being compelled to go away altogether on leave. While he was away on leave I sent another Inspector to take up his duties. During the time he was on leave a good deal of further information was obtained.

2804. You did not suspend Mr. Hatley?—No; I did not.

2805. Would it be done in the ordinary course?—He was away at the time. The whole matter was sifted. When we got to the bottom of it I recommended that his services should be dispensed with. Then the other Inspector took his place, whose services I recommended the Government should retain—Mr. Price.

2806. There is a recommendation as to an amendment in the Act, that it should compel sheep to be dipped before passing through clean flocks in an infected district. That appears to be a matter of considerable importance. Mr. Foster writes drawing attention to the risk that is run, no provision being in the Act to empower the Inspector to cause sheep which do not hold a clean certificate to be dipped?—It is very necessary that such should be done.

2807. You provided for that in the amendment of the Act you submitted to the Government, but I could not find it?—I think it is in that clause where it is provided that no sheep whatever should be removed from any station that had been infected before six months. Dipping, under supervision of the Inspector, might be included with great advantage.

*Hon. the Chairman.*: That meets the case as put by Mr. Foster.

*Captain Russell.*: Mr. Bayly might tell the Committee whether the officer retiring on account of ill-health is now fit for duty.

2808. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Did he return to the service?—At the expiration of his leave, Mr. Price was removed to the place he had charge of. Mr. Price was removed to Nelson.

2809. What was the illness he was suffering from?—He is almost a cripple; he suffers from rheumatism.

2810. You recommended that he should leave the service?—Yes.

2811. No steps were taken on that?—None.

2812. I think you told us yesterday that Mr. Macdonald was in the service down south, and that he is no longer in the service now?—No; he is not.

2813. Did he retire of his own wish?—No; he did not.

2814. Will you say why he left the service?—He was physically incapable of performing his duties.

2815. Was it on your recommendation that he retired?—It was on this account: That he was instructed on several occasions to attend to work in the back portion of the district; he never did so; in fact, he was incapable of getting through. He was close on to seventy years of age or thereabouts to my knowledge. I had known him for several years; he was unfit for anything like active work.

2816. What course did you take in regard to that?—I brought the matter under the notice of the Government on several occasions. I wrote to Mr. Macdonald defining the duties which he had to perform. He could not perform them.

2817. You then recommended formally to the Government that he should retire?—I did.

2818. Was there any condition attached to that recommendation?—I believe Mr. Macdonald has a retiring allowance.

2819. How long had he been in the service?—I think, as nearly as I can recollect, since 1871.

2820. When did he retire?—At the beginning of 1883.

2821. Was he an Inspector under the Provincial Act?—Yes.

2822. What would be the allowance?—A month's salary for every year he had served.

2823. That would be about one year's salary?—Yes.