

SESS. II.—1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON SHEEP AND RABBIT ACTS
(REPORT OF).

Report brought up 17th October, 1884, and ordered to be printed.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the Legislative Council.

FRIDAY, THE 5TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Ordered, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the administration of the Sheep and Rabbit Acts in the colony, with power to confer with any similar Committee of the House of Representatives, and also with power to call for persons and papers; three to form a quorum. The Committee to consist of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, the Hon. Mr. Reynolds, the Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore, K.C.M.G., the Hon. Mr. Robinson, the Hon. Mr. Campbell, the Hon. Mr. Williamson, the Hon. Mr. G. R. Johnson, and the mover."—(*Hon. Captain Fraser.*)

TUESDAY, THE 9TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Ordered, "That the name of the Hon. Mr. Nurse be added to the Select Committee to inquire into the working of the Sheep and Rabbit Acts."—(*Hon. Mr. Nurse.*)

Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

WEDNESDAY, THE 3RD DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Ordered, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the administration of the Sheep and Rabbit Acts in the colony, with power to confer with any similar Committee appointed by the Legislative Council, and to report from time to time; to consist of nine members; three to form a quorum. The Committee to consist of Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie, Mr. Pearson, Captain Russell, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. J. C. Buckland, Mr. Walker, Mr. Dodson, Mr. Harper, and the mover."—(*Mr. Lance.*)

REPORT.

THE Joint Committee appointed to inquire into the administration of the Sheep and Rabbit Acts in the colony, having held twenty-two meetings and examined thirty-three witnesses, has the honour to report, as follows:—

"THE SHEEP ACT, 1878."

The Committee cannot too strongly urge upon the Government the great importance of enforcing, with impartial strictness, the provisions of an Act which has such an important bearing upon an industry that yields fully one-half in value of the total exports of the colony, the Act being one which, so far as the treatment of scab is concerned, appears on the whole to meet the requirements of existing circumstances.

The evidence taken before the Committee shows that the progress made towards the eradication of scab has not been satisfactory. It is true that the Canterbury and Gisborne Districts have been entirely freed from the disease, and that similar progress has been made in portions of the Nelson and Marlborough Districts, which, it is well known, include large tracts of country probably the most difficult to deal with in New Zealand. But the latter fact only serves to prove that at the present moment the entire colony might, like the Australian Colonies, have been quite free from scab. There can, therefore, be no reason why the Districts of Auckland, Wanganui, Wairarapa, Nelson, and Marlborough should still remain infected and a great source of danger to the rest of the colony; and, although undoubtedly in each district there have been obstacles which have added to the difficulty of stamping out the scab, the Committee is strongly of opinion that, had the Act, so soon as it came into operation, been strictly enforced within these districts, the disease would by this time have been eradicated.

The great injustice done by a lax administration of the law in any part of the colony may be fairly illustrated by the case of numerous sheepowners in the Amuri District, who, having been compelled under the Act to clean their flocks at very great cost to themselves, are still unable, on account of the continuance of scab in other parts of the Marlborough District, to take advantage of the Canterbury markets without submitting to the further expense of twice dipping, and the diminution in the value of their sheep consequent thereon.