

So it passed in the negative.

Paragraph 19, as amended, was agreed to.

Paragraphs 20 and 21 read and agreed to.

The petitions of Doris and Ross being further considered, Mr. Lance moved the following resolution: "That, in the case of the petitions of G. Ross and James Doris, which the Committee have partly inquired into, the Committee are of opinion that the Government should cause full inquiry to be made into the matters referred to by some persons outside of the department." Agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the report, as amended, be adopted.

The Committee then adjourned.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 31ST JULY, 1889. (Hon. Mr. ACLAND, Chairman.)

T. G. RICHARDSON, Sheep Inspector, examined.

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Perhaps it would be convenient if you would tell us, without putting questions to you as to every particular, what has been your experience, and what you have done for the past year. Each member of the Committee can put questions to you afterwards, but they would perhaps first like to hear a statement coming from yourself?—I went over to Blenheim, in the Marlborough District, in October last, as Inspector. At that time they held clean certificates throughout the district. A gang of fifteen men were employed in September to scour the country known as Tophouse, Manuka Island, and Mount Patriarch Blocks—to scour for wild sheep, commencing on the 1st October.

2. *Mr. Lance.*] And you say they were at that time holding clean certificates?—Yes.

3. *Hon. Mr. Peter.*] How many men did you say were employed?—Fifteen altogether. The men had not been scouring very long before they got scabby sheep outside the fences. They continued scouring to the first week in November, getting sheep all the time, several of them scabby. In November the men went over to the Red Hills and Manuka Island Blocks.

4. *Mr. Lance.*] Was that on the south side of the Wairau?—North side of the Wairau. They got ten sheep on the Wether hills, seven of them with the Birch Hill mark on, and five of these were scabby. These sheep were known by the manager of the Birch Hill to be there since June—from June to November.

5. *Captain Russell.*] Who has the Birch Hill Run?—The Loan and Mercantile Company. The men were then moved round to the Tophouse Block; they went all through that block until January, when they returned to Red Hills again. During the whole time they were killing wild and marked sheep, but the sheep were not scabby. In February they came back to Mount Patriarch, having scoured that and the surrounding country. On the 27th February they got five sheep with the Birch Hill ear-mark upon them: of these, two were scabby. They continued scouring until the 11th March, but did not get any more. I paid twelve of the men off, keeping, however, three on to the end of March, but they only got two long-tailed lambs. I wished the Loan and Mercantile Company to stock the country—to turn out a lot of sheep and trail over the country. This would have enabled us to discover whether there was any more scabby sheep there or not; but they would not do that. As I said, I paid the men off; all of them at the end of March. There has been no one on the block since. The Loan and Mercantile said they had nothing to do with the sheep or land outside fences.

6. *Hon. the Chairman.*] In whose name was the license?—In the name of the Loan and Mercantile Company.

7. And you say there has been nothing done since?—I laid an information against the Loan and Mercantile under the 27th section of the Act, and another under section 2 of the amended Act of 1888.

8. When was that?—In May. I have been endeavouring to get them to stock the run. Mr. Hanna told me that if I would cancel the lease he would do everything I wanted him to do.

9. *Captain Russell.*] What was the result of the information laid against the company?—They had it adjourned; they disputed the ownership of the property. The case is adjourned to September. A writ has been issued for rent. The Magistrate said he could not decide until the ownership was settled.

10. *Hon. the Chairman.*] The last time they were inspected before October: were they inspected by you?—No; I went there on the 7th October.

11. What was the date you say they held a clean certificate?—The certificate was given on the 24th September.

12. Then, you say every one there held at that time a clean certificate?—Yes; when I went there.

13. Was there any suspicion about any of these runs?—It was doubtful about the Patriarch Block, but no one said it was scabby; they said it was free of sheep.

14. There was supposed to be no sheep on it at the time, and you put men on to scour it?—The men were employed before I took charge.