

153. The Inspector does not object to you driving?—He has no power to do so. The country is held in one holding.

154. How long have you held it?—Thirty-four months since I took possession.

155. By whom was it held before?—By Mr. Joseph Ward.

156. Was he owner of the leased land?—All except that which belongs to me.

157. These were separate runs?—Yes.

158. As you take your sheep to the reserve, is the land all fenced on the other side?—It has been completely fenced for the last few months; the fence goes over the range to Mr. Wood's country.

159. Have there not been complaints that your sheep have been let out from the reserve to find their way home?—One or two weak sheep might stray away; but no scabby sheep ever strayed since I have been there. I have kept men constantly going about the boundary. I believe there have been six sheep altogether that strayed during three years.

160. When you had the Jam Run alone, where did you shear?—On the Waipapa Station.

161. You did not shear on the Clarence Reserve side?—No.

162. With regard to the Sheep Act, have you any remarks to make: do you consider that it operates fairly?—I think it operates unfairly upon men who would do everything the department requires of them. When a man does not do everything the department wishes, then I think he ought to be fined.

163. Do you wish to point out any particular clause in the Act which you think works hardly? You speak generally: you think it is hard for a man to be fined when he is doing everything he can to eradicate scab—doing his best to carry out the Act. Can you point out any clause which should be amended?—I think the clause under which we are fined (clause 23) might be amended. Clause 23, I think, bears very heavily upon the sheepowner. It might be amended in this direction: that if he did everything in his power to eradicate scab, in compliance with the directions of the department, he should not be fined. If he did not do that, he ought to be fined at once.

164. You mean that the course should be adopted which was adopted in respect to the last fine upon you?—In the old Canterbury Act there was a similar clause.

165. Yes; but in the Canterbury Act the person convicted could elect to give the bond?—It was only with the consent of the department that he could do that.

166. You think it would be advisable to act in that direction?—I do not see any good that is done by fining a man who is willing to do everything that is possible. In the case of the man who will not do everything desired by the department, he ought to be made to pay at once.

167. Do you think it is absolutely impossible to clean scab?—No; but I think it requires united action. In one district I have known land that was cleaned to become scabby again through wild sheep straying from unoccupied Crown land.

168. You say that it is wild sheep from the runs held by sheepowners on the coast side that keep the Crown lands scabby. Do not the Inspectors enforce the Act on that side: are they prosecuted and fined?—No action is taken to kill wild sheep straying from Crown lands to the coast side; and from the coast to the Crown lands it is a very rugged country, covered with bush, and of great altitude.

169. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] You speak of the place called a reserve, but it is no longer a reserve when leased to you?—It is no longer a public reserve. It is leased to me, and just the same as other leasehold.

170. A reserve would mean that any person could take sheep there and shear them. But that is not the case?—As it is leased to me it has ceased to be a reserve. I think a man ought to be assisted as far as possible in his efforts to clean his run, that is, if he is willing to make every effort himself. You might ruin many persons by penalties, and the district would remain scabby still. I cannot say whether owners on the adjoining lands have done all that was possible. I have done all that was possible to kill these wild sheep on Crown lands.

171. It appears to me that the least expensive way would be to insist on the adjoining owners uniting together to get rid of these sheep?—I think that the Crown ought to do something; there is a surplus from the sheep-rates that might be used for the purpose.

172. In two or three years these lands might become scabby again if they were cleaned now and left. There is no cessation on the part of the Crown of the causes of these wild sheep getting on Crown lands; but if the people themselves were to take united action, and take care to prevent that recurring, the spread of scab might be prevented?—It is, I think, the department's duty to do everything it can. One man might struggle for ever, and still the sheep would be scabby. My idea is that the plan I have mentioned is the least expensive way of doing it if it could be enforced. It is unjust to require the holders of leased or freehold lands to clean the unoccupied lands of the Crown.

173. *Mr. Buchanan.*] How many sheep have you got on these three runs?—Forty thousand.

174. Has your number increased?—No; it has decreased very much. It was once forty-seven thousand.

175. At no time had you less than at present?—Yes; sometimes we had no more than thirty-eight thousand.

176. You had no less at one time than thirty-eight thousand?—No.

177. About this bond; was there any condition in the bond by which the money-amount which you were fined was to be spent in fencing?—I engaged to spend £3,000 in fencing.

178. What was the amount of the fine?—It was £666 odd altogether. Now I am fencing as fast as I can.

179. What is the acreage of the three runs held by you?—About a hundred thousand acres; it may be a little more or less.

180. How many acres, speaking roughly, have you fenced in—that is, in which you could