

272. Within what time after the certificate was issued did the conviction take place? I put this question to you to point out that, under the Act, the Inspector has first to give notice to the owner of the flock holding the certificate that his sheep are infected. Then he has nine months—six months and three months—before he can be convicted and fined.—In the Tairdale case the manager gets his certificate to-day; in forty-eight hours afterwards he is found killing scabby sheep. He was prosecuted for concealing the fact, and not for failing to clean his sheep.

273. When he gets the certificate for the run, the proprietor may say, "The run was clean when I got this certificate." He will then get the ordinary time for cleaning his flock. Was that so in this case?—Yes; but he could not prove that the scab had been introduced. In forty-eight hours after getting his certificate he is found killing scabby sheep, and he concealed the fact.

274. Do you know whether the Inspector is compelled to make periodical visits?—He is supposed to visit each run once a year.

275. Does he do so?—It is impossible, I believe, in some cases. He is supposed to do so.

276. Why, is there insufficient inspection, or is the work too much?—I was speaking upon the subject to Mr. Foster, who has a great deal to do outside his duties as Inspector; he said it was impossible; but I do not think it necessary for the Inspector to visit annually if the sheep on a run are really clean.

277. Are there Crown lands near you?—There are some lands—"No Man's Land," they are called—upon which I believe there are scabby sheep.

278. Have steps been taken to get rid of them?—In Amuri there have, but in Marlborough I do not think so. Men who have a run with Crown lands alongside may manage to get a certificate by fencing off the high rough ground, but scabby sheep come from the outside of the fence, and the certificate is not worth the paper it is written on.

279. In an extract from returns (4) I have before me, 31st of March, 1884, Marlborough District is said to be infected, the Amuri, also the Waiiau.—Since that return every run in the Amuri has obtained a clean certificate. In one case where some "S" branded sheep had come into the district from a scabby run it happened they were actually clean sheep, although "infected" legally, and the case was not gazetted.

280. In the report it is stated that one reason why scab is not got rid of soon is that owners of scabby sheep do not use the proper materials?—I have no doubt that there has been a great deal of bad materials sold to runholders.

281. Have not Inspectors power to give directions as to what material should be used?—The Act says in regard to "dressing" material—"dressing" means having applied to any sheep any reputed scab-destroying material. I think that the Inspector can refuse his certificate unless the sheep are dipped to his satisfaction.

282. *Mr. Lance.*] That is so: the Inspector must be satisfied.—The Inspector has practically the right to say you shall dip with this, thus determining the strength and materials of the dip. Sometimes an Inspector gives a certificate in favour of Little's dip, which he afterwards condemns. Another Inspector gave a testimonial in favour of the glycerine dip, which again is totally condemned by his chief, Mr. Boulton.

283. *Mr. Pearson.*] What dip do you use?—Nothing but lime and sulphur. Tobacco and sulphur is considered the best dip, but it is too expensive.

284. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] I understood you to say there was no scab in the Amuri county, but that there were certain Government lands in which scabby sheep might be found?—Yes.

285. And it is that which prevents Amuri being declared a clean district?—One person said he saw sheep with broken wool on Crown lands next to the Hopefield run. Mr. Gibson's run, adjoining the Amuri, is also scabby.

286. *Mr. Pearson.*] Can you suggest any amendments in the administration of the Act?—I think so.

287. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What amendments do you suggest?—I think the Act as it is could be worked more satisfactorily than it has been; for this reason, some of the department have abrogated some of the clauses of the Act by refusing to take notice of, or prosecute under, these clauses, while they do act under these clauses in other districts. On complaining of this to Mr. Bayly, he replied, "We want to administer the Act benevolently: we want to clean the country without running anybody."

288. Then, do you consider they have not done their work?—No, but I consider this "benevolent" administration is all humbug. You may save one by it, but you ruin half-a-dozen others. To administer the Act strictly is what is wanted.

289. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Might I suggest to the witness that he would give us some cases in point?—A very notorious one is that to which I have referred: I mean the case of Mr. Walter Gibson. It applies also to various other cases. In consequence of this mistaken "benevolence," a tax of at least 1s. 6d. is put upon the owner of every sheep that is sent into Canterbury from Amuri. They have to be dipped twice, and they will not bring within a shilling of the usual market price in consequence,

290. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Sheep Inspectors may recommend all sorts of dips?—I think it a great mistake that Inspectors should be dragged into this matter of dips for sheep. They should be kept aloof from such things. If it were not for Mr. Gibson's chronic scab the whole of that district would be clean. When you cross the border into Canterbury you have to dip your sheep twice at 2d. or 3d. a head each time: a horrible state of things exist at that dip. The sheep are frightfully knocked about and abused, and consequently no buyer will give within a shilling a head, besides dipping expenses, 6d. I think the loss is near 2s. a head—that would be loss of £500 on 10,000 sheep. Mr. Walter Gibson was fined the other day. He has been fined twice within twelve or eighteen months, and I am informed that the Government have not yet exacted the fine.