

451. What separates you from Waipapa?—An imaginary line.

452. What distance do the sheep go into the bush?—They may go three or four miles.

453. They do not go through the bush to Waipapa?—It is too far.

454. Can you suggest any way in which this country can be kept clean?—By killing the sheep. That is the only way in which it can be done in anything like a reasonable time.

455. If the whole of the runowners set to work to kill the sheep outside the fenced country?—That would clean the country. The difficulty is less when these sheep are killed. But I think that must be done by compensation. In that case the last sheep would be got. A person should not be able to stock his run until he was perfectly clean.

456. Why do you think that compensation should be given?—We did not bring the scab there. We stocked it in the first instance. We were the first then that were fined. My run was what is called a maiden run: it was never stocked before. I knew the danger of bringing scab to a place of that kind, and I took every precaution to get clean sheep and keep them clean. The run was clean for four years. There was no Sheep Act at that time. The Provincial Government sold pieces of land of from fifty to sixty acres to small farmers. These farmers went about the rest of the province and bought scabby sheep, twenty or thirty at a time. After that it became impossible to clean.

457. Do you think there are many owners in the same position as yourself who would be quite willing to kill these sheep without any compensation?—No.

458. How many sheep are you carrying now?—I have carried ten thousand. I have reduced the number to eight thousand.

459. I gather from you that you maintain that it is impossible to clean your run?—I maintain that it is impossible unless those sheep are killed.

460. And if they were killed off you could keep the country clean?—Yes, the country could be kept clean, provided sheep were not allowed to go back into the country that is now scabby, at least for a certain time, to allow the country to get clean.

461. Is there any reason to suppose that it would become so?—I think so. I myself would take care to have clean sheep. I think it must be evident to the meanest intelligence that I would not willingly come under the operation of the Sheep Act a second time if I could help it.

462. With regard to the Inspectors, do they do their duties properly?—The whole department is not what it might be for the money we pay for it. Some of the men employed as Inspectors know nothing of sheep before they are appointed. Many of the appointments were of men who had generally failed in some other employment. In some cases when a man failed to get employment on a sheep station he was put into the department.

463. You make a general complaint against the department?—Yes; I complain generally of the department.

464. You say they do not carry out the Act?—I say they are not capable of carrying it out: they are inferior men. We ought to have better men for the money we pay them. So far as I can see, when you want to get good men to go among sheep and carry out the Act, they ought to be men who are known to be successful; but, instead of that, they take men who are notoriously known to be unsuccessful.

465. Do you not think you ought to make some more definite statement?—To make a more definite statement would be to become personal.

466. You do not wish to make any definite statement on this point?—I do not wish to be personal.

467. Have you anything to say as regards the working of the Act in respect of other sheep-owners?—I do not think it is enforced fairly. I think there is a great deal too much favouritism. The first time I was summoned there was a complaint from the Inspectors, by Messrs. Henry Wharton and Co., of some people who were near them. I did not touch them in any way. I was summoned, but the runowners next to them were not summoned. This shows that there must have been some animus, for no Inspector had ever been on our run.

468. Whose run?—Our run. They know nothing whatever about the sheep; therefore I think I was unfairly dealt with. I never injured any one. The chief of the department knows nothing about my run; therefore I did not see why I should have been summoned [reads summing up of the Resident Magistrate on the 29th May, 1883].

469. Although you were summoned for your run being infected, you do not mean to say that it was not infected. You rather complain that, as you were summoned, all the others should not have been summoned as well?—Yes. You can see Mr. Bayly's letter [reads]. I complained that I should be mulcted when I was not the person who was complained against. It appeared to me that it was thought desirable on the part of the Inspectors to make a demonstration before the session.

470. Were you fined on that occasion?—Yes; but the Government remitted it at once.

471. Are you in the same district as Messrs. Wharton and Co.?—In the same sheep district, but not in the same provincial district.

472. You are aware that one flock being scabby made the whole district "infected"?—Yes; but my run could not have infected that of Wharton and Co.

473. Were steps ever taken against others?—Yes.

474. With what result?—I and Mr. Tinline were fined. Walter Gibson has never paid any money; they took a bond from him.

475. For which run was that?—The Clarence Valley. Gordon Gibson has now left his run. Another gentleman, Mr. Tinline, was fined. He had the run a very short time. He paid his fine. It was shown that in equity there was no case against me. The charge laid against me was that I had not taken reasonable means to clean. It was shown that the Inspector had no ground for saying such a thing [reads.]