

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.

In order that the Act may be properly administered, it is imperative that the appointments of officers to carry out the law should be made with greater care than in the past, and none but efficient men allowed to remain in the service. Moreover, until scab is eradicated, it is not desirable that Inspectors in infected districts should be employed in any other capacity than that of Inspectors under the Sheep and Rabbit Acts. The Committee has also come to the conclusion that there is no hope of complete eradication of scab unless the Government at once take steps to remove from their employment those officers who, by the results of the past, have proved themselves incapable of stamping-out the scab in the district to which they have been appointed, and, further, that no officer who fails to clean the sheep under his charge within a period of two years should be retained in the service.

At the same time, the Committee would point out that remissions of fines inflicted upon convictions for breaches of the Act have been granted, in opposition to the intention of the Legislature and the meaning of the Act—the evident purport of which is that the imposition and payment of penalties should be imperative—and that these remissions have not, so far as can be ascertained, led to greater efforts on the part of the offenders to clean their sheep, but, on the contrary, have decidedly discouraged the officers in their attempts to perform their duty.

The Committee thinks that encouragement and support should be given to all officers whilst acting with diligence and good judgment in carrying out their instructions; and, with a view to affording all proper facilities for the eradication of scab, recommends that every assistance be rendered to the Inspectors for the purpose of clearing wild sheep from unoccupied Crown lands in infected districts.

Before leaving this part of the inquiry, the Committee would draw attention to one instance of serious loss to the colony at large (probably not generally known) which results from the existence of scab amongst our flocks. At the present time, and with a prospect of long continuance, there is a great demand for sheep in Australian markets, at prices which would yield large profits upon export from New Zealand. In consequence, however, of the quarantine regulations, New Zealand sheep are virtually excluded from Australia. Were this the only serious result of the existence of scab in the colony, it would yet fully justify the most earnest appeal to Government to use every effort to eradicate it in as speedy a manner as possible.

It will also be apparent on reference to the annual sheep returns (H.—3., 1884, p. 2), that, whilst the sheep rate in the Districts of Napier, Canterbury, and Otago, where there is no scab, exceeds the salaries paid to Inspectors by an aggregate sum of £4,029, the rate from the remaining districts, which are infected districts, falls short of the required amount by £3,010; and that, as the total sheep rate exceeds by £1,019 the total amount paid in salaries, it follows that the clean districts are contributing no less than £3,010 towards the expense of eradicating scab in the other districts, besides £1,019 towards the general revenue of the colony.

Lastly, the attention of the Committee has been drawn to the prevalence of lice amongst the flocks in several parts of the colony, and to the absence of authority under the 68th section of the Act for Inspectors to compel owners to dip their sheep, unless such sheep shall have been previously declared infected within the meaning of the Act.

This course involves more serious consequences than the evil to be remedied requires, and the Committee therefore thinks it desirable that an Act should be passed at once giving Inspectors the necessary powers to compel the dipping of sheep infected with lice, and to prevent them whilst thus infected from being travelled on roads or off the property of the owner. With this object in view, it recommends that a Bill to effect this purpose be introduced by Government without delay.

“THE RABBIT NUISANCE ACT, 1882.”

This Act will only continue in operation until the 1st October, 1885, and Parliament next session will no doubt be called upon to reconsider it with a view to its re-enactment.

It is gratifying to find that the evidence taken by the Committee substantially indorses the Superintending Inspector's report for the past year, that a substantial reduction in the number of rabbits has been effected in the districts and localities where they at one time threatened to completely extinguish the farming and sheep-growing industries, and that the steps taken to prevent their spread towards the hitherto uninfested districts of the colony have been attended with a considerable amount of success.

On the other hand, however, the evidence unmistakably proves that, notwithstanding the ample powers provided by the Act, which has now been nearly two years in operation, and the overwhelming proof from the Kaikouras and other districts that poisoned grain, followed up by the introduction of the ferret, has practically placed the solution of the rabbit difficulty within our reach, the colony is still suffering great annual loss from the immense numbers of rabbits which yet continue to infest the whole of the southern portion of the Middle Island, as well as large areas in the Nelson, Marlborough, and Wairarapa Districts.

The Committee are under no difficulty in deciding upon the principal causes which, so far, have prevented the pest from being reduced to a minimum.

Prominent amongst them are the large tracts of unoccupied Crown lands and reserves in the rougher portions of the Middle Island, which afford breeding-grounds for the pest, and whence the more valuable adjoining country is again and again stocked afresh. The Committee cannot too strongly urge upon the Government the necessity of taking immediate steps to provide for the occupation of these lands on such terms as would insure the destruction of the rabbits thereon, and thus free the colony from the heavy and ever-recurring annual outlay involved in rabbit destruction by contract. Until some such plan is adopted it seems hopeless to expect any great diminution of the pest, or any reduction of the expense which the owners of adjoining lands are most unfairly and unjustly compelled to incur in self-defence.

The Committee, however, is strongly of opinion that the most frequent cause of failure to destroy rabbits, and consequent public dissatisfaction, is the evident unfitness of many of the officers

for the important and responsible duties imposed upon them. The various witnesses examined were naturally reluctant to name individual cases, but the Committee is none the less satisfied that many appointments have been made of men whose previous history furnished nothing but a record of failure in other walks of life, and incapacity and unfitness for any responsibility such as is contemplated by this Act. To carry out its provisions with vigour, it is necessary that the Inspectors should be allowed to exercise large powers; and when it is remembered that, under present arrangements these same officers are intrusted with the working of the Sheep Act, it will be at once recognized that they have duties to perform involving great responsibility, and requiring the use of much tact and judgment.

The Committee thinks these considerations cannot fail to give weight to the remarks above made relating to the appointment of officers, and to impress the Government with the duty which rests upon them of at once dispensing with the services of men unqualified for such an important duty.

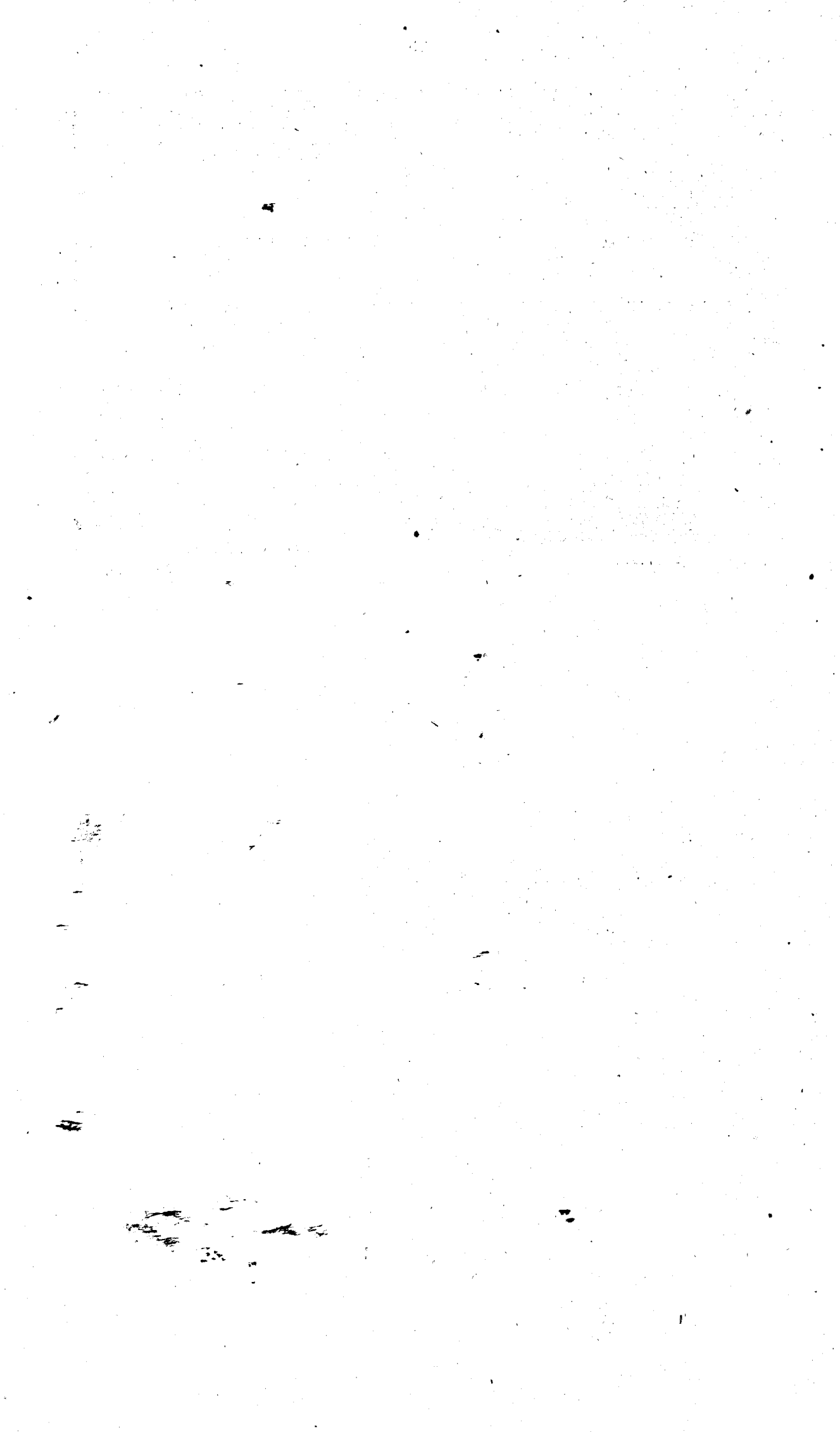
It is also of opinion that the Sheep and Rabbit Acts are alike well framed for effecting the purposes for which they were passed—that it is not desirable to make any other amendments in them than that above mentioned; and, just in proportion as the officers charged with putting them in force are well chosen or the reverse, so will the administration be attended with success or failure.

The Committee is further of opinion that, in view of the great success which has attended the use of the ferret, the Government should lose no time in contracting with suitable persons for delivery in New Zealand of considerable numbers by every direct steamer, in order that they may be turned out on the unoccupied Crown lands and reserves. They would also direct the Superintending Inspector's attention to the necessity of protection to ferrets disclosed by the evidence of witnesses, who complain of pressure from Inspectors to use packs of dogs as well as traps, to the inevitable destruction of every description of natural enemy.

The Committee desire, in conclusion, to express their entire concurrence with the almost universal tenor of the evidence, that it would be highly undesirable to place the management of the Sheep and Rabbit Acts within reach of the local influences and jealousies which would inevitably accompany their administration by the local bodies.

17th October, 1884.

G. RANDALL JOHNSON,
Chairman.



SHEEP AND RABBIT ACTS COMMITTEE.

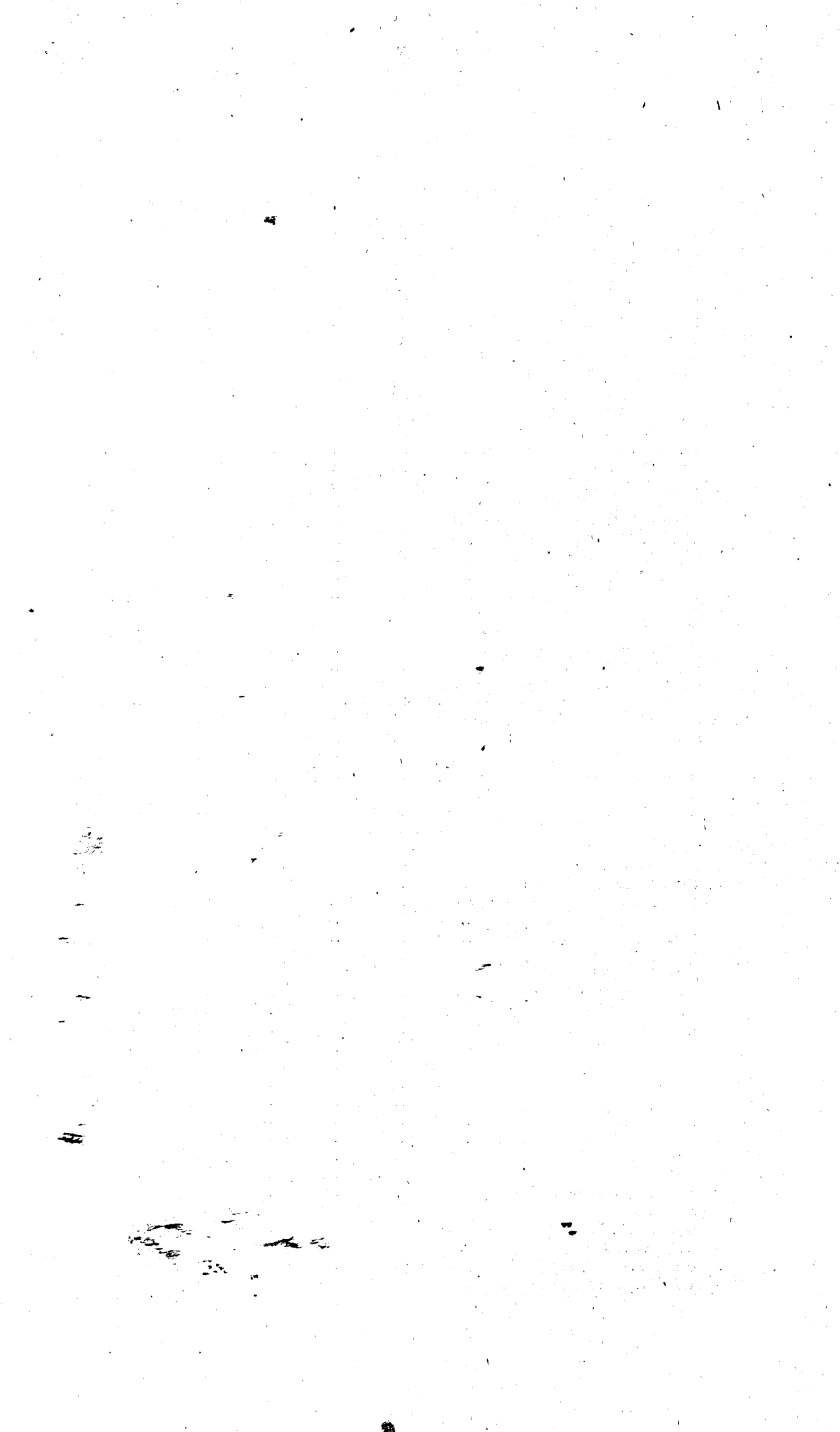
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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

I.—S H E E P.

THURSDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 1884 (Hon. G. R. JOHNSON, Chairman).

Mr. W. D. Wood, examined.

1. *Hon. the Chairman*: In this inquiry into the working of the Sheep and Rabbit Act it is desirable that we should keep the subjects, as well as the district, separate. (To witness): You have a run in the Marlborough Sheep District?—Yes, Swyncombe Run; it formerly belonged to Captain Keene.

2. It is in the Kaikoura Subdivision?—Yes.

3. Is there scab on your run?—At the present time part of the flock is under the surveillance of the Scab Inspector, owing to the fact of one of my neighbours' sheep having strayed into my paddock, and which was branded with the letter S. I have no actually scabby sheep on the run, yet in the eye of the law we are held to be virtually scabby from the circumstance of my neighbour's sheep, which was branded with the letter S, having strayed into my paddock. That necessitates all the sheep in my paddock being branded with the letter S, and the clean certificate being cancelled.

4. Are you satisfied with the working of the Sheep Act in your district?—No; I do not consider the Act has been carried out. It is any one's Act, according to the interpretation put upon it by different Inspectors.

5. But have not the Inspectors instructions to carry it out strictly?—I could hardly know what their instructions are.

6. Do you think the Act requires amendment, or is it under instructions from the Government being carried out that the Act is working unsatisfactorily?—I only know that the Act is not wholly in force.

7. But if it were put in force?—I think then it would be all that is necessary.

8. Have you any amendment to the Act to offer, or do you suggest anything to improve its administration?—The difficulty of carrying out the Act as it is now arises from there being a large quantity of land called "no man's land," or rather it is land which belongs to the Government, and not leased to any one. On these lands there is a large number of wild sheep, which are scabby, and will stray among the clean flocks. As long as these wild sheep adjoin the runs it is almost impossible to keep the runs clean.

9. Has no effort been made to get rid of these sheep?—In some instances I believe there have been efforts made, but not on all Government lands.

10. What extent is there of this "no man's land"?—I could not say. It is on the tops of the hills and mountains, but it is a very large area in the whole of the Marlborough District.

11. Does it all lie in one block?—No; it is in different blocks.

12. Would it be possible to fence off this "no man's land"?—It would be possible, taking the line of fence below the snow-line, but it would be a great expense to do it—an expense which I think the tenants are at present not able to meet. I should like to suggest that the Government should act towards their tenants as a landlord, and, so far as Government land is concerned, that they should assist their tenants by fencing this land. They might charge interest on the outlay. It might be something like a bottomry bond upon a vessel. The law ought to be made so as to make it compulsory for tenants to fence land. If they had not the means, then I think the Government should assist the tenants in fencing, and charge so much per cent.—say, 5 per cent. at least. I may state, in my opinion, it is not possible to clean runs unless they are fenced. For instance, on one run I am told it takes fourteen days to muster the sheep. A man went out with his blankets, &c., and did not return for fourteen days.

13. Which run is that?—Mr. Rees's, of Waipapa. If it came on cloudy or stormy a man would have to return with whatever sheep he can get; the rest have to be mustered at another time, or perhaps they are not mustered at all.

14. You said you did not think the Act is carried out impartially, can you give the Committee any instances to which you refer?—It is "no man's Act," in that it is not carried out strictly.

15. But is it carried out with impartiality: in other words, can you give instances to show that it is not applied equally to all?—I can give an instance in the case of Mr. Ingles. He has been fined for having scabby sheep. On another run the fine has not been enforced against the owner. In the latter case the owner has entered into a bond to expend the money in fencing.

16. *Mr. Lance.*] To whom do these other runs belong—to Mr. Gibson?—Yes, to Mr. Gibson.

17. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have they lately been sold?—Not lately.

18. You referred to Mr. Ingles's run as an instance where the fine was not enforced?—No; there it was enforced.

Hon. Mr. Waterhouse: It was enforced in one case and not in the other.

19. *Hon. the Chairman.*] It was in Mr. Gibson's case that it was not enforced. Can you state how long these runs (Waipapa) have been infected: is it a very long period?—About twenty years; I cannot speak positively.

20. Are any of them free from scab?—They do not hold a clean certificate, I believe.

21. Is there any reason for their being so long infected?—It is because the Act has not been enforced, I suppose.

22. When the Act itself was passed, a period of five years was allowed to the District of Marlborough before certain portions of the Act were brought into force. The object, I believe, was to enable the sheepowners to take the necessary steps to clean their flocks. Did they avail themselves of that?—They availed themselves of the time, but they did not clean their flocks.

23. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] They availed themselves of the time, but they did not take the steps?—I do not know whether they took steps, but they do not hold a clean certificate. There have been difficulties in the way.

24. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you hold these difficulties to be insuperable?—I am not in a position to answer that question. Those more conversant with the runs will be able to give you more information.

25. What is the name of the Inspector?—It was Mr. Passau. It is not Mr. Foster; he is Inspector in Charge.

26. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Clifton?—Yes, that is the name.

27. Mr. Clifton was formerly of Castlepoint. He is a very good man?—That is his name.

28. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do the Inspectors make periodical visits to the district?—Mr. Passau lives in the district. I think the new Inspector means to do so likewise.

29. In a case that came before us some time ago, I think one Inspector was not able to state what number of sheep was on the run, and he went so far as to say that he never was on that particular run. Do the Inspectors fairly visit the different parts of the country over which they are Inspectors, so as to know something about them?—I think so.

30. You have no complaint as to the manner in which the Inspector carries out his duties?—None whatever. The Inspectors seem very anxious to do their duty and clean the runs if possible.

31. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] The witness recommends fencing either by the occupants or by the Government, or by both. We have had evidence given to us that these fences were liable to be broken down by the sliding of the snow. It was also said that it would be impossible to keep them up?—I think the snow-line should be made the basis. That fences should be erected as far as the snow-line, shutting out anything where fences were likely to be broken.

32. How are you going to distinguish?—Unless you do something in the way of fencing, how is it possible to get a clean muster? It is almost impossible where people have to go out for days to look for them: it is impossible, unless you get a boundary within which you can confine your sheep when collected.

Hon. Mr. Williamson: I express my own opinion that it would be a less expensive process for parties interested to destroy those sheep.

Witness: The difficulty is for parties to collect them.

Hon. Mr. Williamson: It may be difficult, but I think it would be the less expensive mode of dealing with the matter than fencing.

Witness: But if you destroy all our sheep, how are we to live?

Hon. Mr. Williamson: Of the sheep that come from "no man's land," most of them must have come from the sheepowners themselves. I certainly think it would be less expensive if they were to muster with the hands of the different runs and destroy these sheep.

Witness: The same thing is likely to occur over and over again. Sheep will be always likely to stray over these runs.

33. *Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore.*] Would sheep live under the snow of the winter? If the Government were to shoot down all the wild sheep, would it not be impossible to have scab?—Yes; provided none of the other flocks could get back to this ground.

34. Suppose you kill them all off in the autumn?—Every flock will go over this very ground. For instance, my flock is on one side of the ranges, Mr. Gibson's is on the other side. They will sometimes cross the range. A stray sheep will get into other flocks unless there is provision made against it by fencing. I have put up sixty miles of fencing in two years. My fence runs between Government land and my neighbour's land. I can call on my neighbour to take some share of the fencing. I may call on the Government, but they will not.

35. When the snow has once fallen there is no danger. It is to be presumed that all sheepowners have mustered their flocks; only those outside are left. Then, by killing all the sheep you can, there ought to be no danger left, if everybody did so. It would not be possible for these sheep to come back?—You may have boundary-shepherds, but I do not think that boundary-shepherds will do it.

36. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Are there many unfenced runs between "no man's land" and these properties?—There are very few indeed which are fenced. Most of them are unfenced. Sheep Inspectors have impressed upon the owners the necessity of fencing, but they say they have not the means to fence.

37. *Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore.*] There are no physical difficulties in the way, such as an avalanche coming from the tops of the hills, that would prevent it?—There is, perhaps, some rough land across which you could not put a fence.

One more question as to the means of getting rid of the two pests. Would it be better if each were dealt with by a separate department?

Hon. the Chairman: We proposed to take the sheep question first.

38. *Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore.*] I only wish to ask this question: Whether, witness, you think we could or not manage to get rid of the two pests more effectually if a department were specially organized for extirpating each, or whether Inspectors should not be both Sheep and Rabbit Inspectors?—I do not think the present department has more work than it can do. I do not see what use it would be separating the two.

39. Both are special in their way. It might happen that the services of one man were more valuable than those of another?—I do not think that is a difficulty.

40. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Suppose the scab was eradicated, would the country carry more sheep than at present, or are some runs overstocked, considering that they are scabby?—It is generally considered that a scabby flock, if it is to be cleaned, will require some clean ground—that is to say, that the sheep shall be kept off infected ground for some time after they have been dipped. In that case you cannot stock so heavily.

41. My question is, whether, if there was no scab, you could carry more sheep than you are doing now?—I have 18,000 acres on which I have not been able to put one sheep in consequence of my fear of there being scabby sheep about, and that any sheep I should put there would be infected.

42. Do you think that an injury has been done to the colony by the scab not being eradicated?—Yes; I might mention that one particular run has been understocked for several years from the same cause. Mr. Bullen, of the Kaikoura, has kept a large tract of country, about twenty thousand acres, between himself and scabby runs, unstocked, so that his flocks might not be infected. All these parts of the country could be fully stocked if there were no scab.

43. *Hon. Mr. Nurse.*] Are the fences not liable to be broken by the snow?—Yes.

44. Are not all of them certain to be broken?—No, not certain, for sometimes the snow is not sufficiently heavy; but they are liable to be broken.

45. Might not an avalanche come down and sweep away fences?—In such places it would not be prudent to put up a fence.

46. *Captain Russell.*] I understood you to say that the chief danger of prolonging the existence of scab lay in the fact of sheep getting into the higher grounds, and then being driven down; that the only way of meeting the difficulty was by putting a fence below the snow-line. To what extent would the runs be affected by shutting off the snow-land?—They will be affected to the extent of 10 or 20 per cent. I think no sheep could be turned in that country in the snow-time; but they could be mustered before the winter came on.

47. My question had this direction: I am supposing you were obliged to keep your stock down for one or two years; would that render it necessary to reduce the number of flocks considerably? Not very considerably. It certainly would reduce the carrying capacity.

48. Have you any idea of the extent?—I cannot say, because I do not know the extent of the runs.

49. Take your own case as an instance?—In fencing that country I think we have shut out 8,000 acres. About half of that would be available for many months in the year. I think it would be available for six months.

50. Does it carry much stock during these six months?—A very fair proportion.

51. Do you think it would seriously interfere with the quantity of sheep if that was shut up for several months? Would it effect the carrying of sheep—10, 20, or 25 per cent.?—It depends upon the amount of country shut up. I could not give you any idea.

52. *Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore.*] With reference to the snow-line, I do not know whether Mr. Wood knows it, but in the Malvern Hills they told me that when it was coming near the snow-time they turned out their shepherds to bring the sheep below the snow-line. I want to know whether that could not be adopted in the cases he refers to, and whether that would not preclude any danger of scab?—I think it would be difficult to carry out that system in Kaikoura.

53. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do you know any case in the Marlborough District where, immediately after a clean certificate had been granted to a run, it has been discovered that the owner of the run had commenced to kill scabby sheep—that is, suppose a clean certificate granted to-day, and presently, in two or three days, it is found that the owner or his shepherds are killing the sheep for which the certificate was given?—I do not know of any such instance.

54. As to fencing, you state that you have erected within the last year or two sixty miles of fencing, and that your neighbour, Mr. Gibson, has done some. Do you think that you could be sure of cleaning scab in your locality by being able to muster your respective flocks of sheep within the fenced portion, then hunting on the wild land outside, and dipping those sheep that could be caught?—I see no reason why that plan should not be carried out successfully. I think it could.

55. But you say, generally, that many sheepowners have not sufficient capital to enable them to do that?—That is the fact.

56. Can you say, of your own knowledge, that a sufficient portion of the area of each run could be fenced in, and whether there is a percentage of land not touched by the snow to carry most of the sheep, say, for two or three months of the year?—I think so; but I am hardly competent to answer the question decisively. I do not know the country sufficiently. I do not know the country on the other side of the range. I suppose it could be done.

57. You do so in your own case?—I do so in my own case.

58. Do you know sufficient of Mr. Gibson's to say?—I do not know sufficient in his case to say.

59. In the case you have instanced, of a person taking fourteen days to muster, and, in the event of misty or gloomy weather, returning in the meantime without many of the sheep. They had no fencing?—Little or no fencing.

60. But with fencing he could be in the same position as yourself?—If they had the proper fencing they could have confined their main flock of sheep, and mustered stragglers at any time afterwards.

61. There is a shearing reserve adjoining your run?—Yes.

62. Are scabby sheep shorn on that reserve?—Yes.

63. How do they get there?—They are driven over from the other side of the range and along a reserved driving-track between Mr. Bullen's run and mine, until they reach the shearing-reserve paddock and yards.

64. But they are driven through the reserve; and is all of that Government land?—Yes.

65. Is that fenced off?—Yes; it is all practically fenced off.

66. Gibson's sheep are driven there to be shorn?—He leases the reserve.

67. The Government did not consider themselves bound to fence it?—No.

68. You have to look after the fencing?—We have lately erected a mutual fence on or near the reserve boundary with my run.

69. Are there any other flocks shorn besides Mr. Gibson's?—Mr. Gibson owns three runs; all the sheep on these three runs are shorn on the reserve.

70. Do I understand that there is a strip of land for the passage of his sheep; that it is not fenced, and that it adjoins private property?—It adjoins private property. We have lately put up a fence between ourselves. Mr. Gibson owns the reserve. He has agreed to pay half the expense of the fence.

71. Can Mr. Gibson get his wool out?—There is no necessity for his using the reserve, only for convenience. The sheep could be shorn elsewhere, which ought to be done.

72. *Captain Russell.*] How many miles has Mr. Gibson to drive his sheep?—Mr. Gibson will be able to give you better information.

73. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] He would be able to have his sheep shorn in any case, even if he did not go to that reserve?—Yes.

74. *Mr. Lance.*] Do you consider this shearing reserve between yourself and Mr. Bullen a great element of danger?—Yes; a very great element of danger.

75. What is the area of the shearing reserve?—About seven thousand acres.

76. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] I gather that you believe the Act has worked unsatisfactorily, not from any defect in the Act itself, but from defective administration?—I think so. I do not say that it has broken down; sheep might be cleaned under it.

77. Are you of opinion that if the Act had been strictly enforced the Province of Marlborough would have been free from infection at the present time?—If the Act had been strictly enforced some years back, either the sheep-farmers would have been ruined, or the country would have been clean.

78. Are remissions of penalties at present made to any extent, so far as you are aware?—Not to any very large extent. There has been a remission of penalties on the Waipapa.

79. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Who owns that?—Mr. Rees: he has only taken it over lately. The Sheep Department thought it would be hard on him to enforce the penalties; they have, therefore, given him time. The penalties have not been enforced where a conviction has taken place in certain other runs, namely, Mr. Gibson's Warden and Tytler Runs.

80. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Are you of opinion that the informations are regularly laid in cases of offences against the Act?—As far as I know they have been.

81. The 27th clause provides that infected sheep, after a period of one week of their being known to be infected, and which are not herded by shepherds or depasturing in country substantially fenced, are liable to a penalty of not less than 3d. nor exceeding 5s. for each sheep?—I do not think that clause has ever been enforced in Marlborough.

82. In spite of this provision of the law that sheep when infected should be herded or kept within the limits of a run substantially fenced, so far as you are aware no efforts have been made to carry that out?—I am not aware of any.

83. Are you aware that that clause was only suspended until the 1st January, 1881, and that it has been in active operation in the Province of Marlborough for now two years?—It ought to have been. I have been in the Province of Marlborough myself only about two years, so that I cannot speak to that.

84. This, then, is an illustration of the fact that the Act has not been strictly enforced?—That is my own opinion.

85. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] This reserve, you say, contains 7,000 acres, and the sheep come down there to be shorn. I suppose many of them are scabby?—Yes.

86. Are they all shorn at the same woolshed?—Yes.

87. When they come back they must come back full of scab?—All that are shorn in that shed are scabby, more or less.

88. And then they are allowed to go and find their way where they like?—It is supposed that the shepherds drive the sheep back into the country, but they do not always do it.

Hon. the Chairman: How is it possible to get rid of the scab if that is the case. We know it will last.

Hon. Mr. Waterhouse: It has been proved to last the whole of the winter in England.

89. *Hon. the Chairman.*] If they go in there they must come out more scabby than they went in. Before they are driven to the reserve are they inspected, and have they obtained from the Inspector a pass to permit them to travel?—I do not think it is necessary to obtain a pass-permit. The whole of the country belongs to the same owner.

90. *Mr. Pearson.*] And he (Mr. Gibson) also rents the reserve?—Yes.

91. *Hon. the Chairman.*] No other flocks use it but Mr. Gibson's?—None but Mr. Gibson's.

Mr. Pearson: If they are scabby the fact of shearing them there accounts for the scab.

92. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Would you not advise that the reserve should be sold to some person?—Mr. Gibson has a lease of it.

93. From whom?—From the Government. It was reserved for a shearing reserve for the benefit of three runs which have literally passed into the hands of one man.

94. Why should not the Government consider this matter and say they will not have the nuisance any longer?—I represented the matter to Mr. Bayley, as there was so much danger, and that he should stop sheep being driven over, but he said he had no power to do so, as the whole of the land was in Mr. Gibson's lease.

95. Actually from the Government?—Yes; from the Government. I certainly thought it was a matter with which he could interfere if he liked, but he did not think he could do so.

96. It appears to me this ought to be stopped?—It ought, undoubtedly.

97. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Mr. Gibson's lease extends over the whole, so that when he drives his sheep to be shorn he does not take the sheep off his run?—They are on his own run from the beginning to the end. But, as these were three distinct flocks, it occurred to me whether there was anything in the Act under which they might be regarded as separate runs, and treat them as such, so as to prevent sheep from being driven from one to the other.

Hon. Mr. Waterhouse: They are returned as one run.

98. *Hon. the Chairman.*] The reserve was to provide for the shearing of the flocks of several runholders?—It was intended for any one who liked to use it.

99. I was about to ask how it passed into Mr. Gibson's hands?—Mr. Gibson was the only person using it, and he offered to pay rent for it.

100. The Government accepted his offer and gave him a lease of it?—Yes.

101. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Are you aware that after the expiration of next year it will not be legal for him to run the rams among the ewes when scab is proved to exist? The Inspector will have no discretion. When the flock is infected it will be imperative to separate the rams from the ewes, with a penalty for each ram that is not kept separate. Will not the effect of that be to ruin sheep-farmers unless they take provision for fencing in their land?—It will be so in many instances. I am informed that many sheep-farmers have not the means to fence, and they must submit to be ruined.

102. Are individual interests to be considered in preference to public interests when individual interests threaten to inflict on the public serious loss?—I am not prepared to answer that.

103. Is it not within your knowledge that, if the numbers of flocks are curtailed, it is in every person's power to get rid of scab? In the case of Mr. Gibson, has he not increased his flock from 24,000 to 43,000?—I believe so.

104. Is it possible that he can so readily keep clean 43,000 as 24,000: by increasing his flock he has increased his difficulty in cleansing them?—The danger which these flocks constitute to the neighbourhood is undoubted.

105. *Hon. Sir. G. S. Whitmore.*] Is it the case that some Sheep Inspectors in that part of the country have made arrangements with some persons to take their bond, allowing them to spend the money represented by that bond in cleaning their sheep?—That is an arrangement not with the Inspector but with the Government, after the Inspector has prosecuted and obtained a conviction. When the conviction is obtained, the Inspector has nothing more to do with the case.

106. You are not aware under what law that is done?—I believe it is under the Governor in Council.

107. Has the Governor in Council power to give a man money for the purpose of cleaning his flocks?—I believe the Governor in Council has power to do anything he likes.

108. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you any other remarks to make as to the working of the Act?—No.

109. *Mr. Buchanan.*] I would like to ascertain the general opinion of Mr. Wood on this point: whether the greatest bar to cleaning sheep is the want of capital: that relates to what is to be done or what ought to be done to get rid of scab?—I hardly know how to answer that question; because I have been told by one of Mr. Gibson's overseers that he has plenty of capital at his back, and that he intends to carry out the arrangement so far as his run is concerned. But I think that is the great difficulty at the present time; it is the great difficulty in most cases.

110. Then, your general answer would be "Yes;" that the want of capital is the greatest bar to getting rid of scab?—Yes.

111. *Hon. Mr. Nurse.*] Do you think that any great public injury would be inflicted if these shearing sheds were abolished, or resumed and sold by the Government?—I think that at the present time, although called a shearing reserve, it is the property of Mr. Gibson. The Government could not, therefore, at present resume and sell it. It is used now, but Mr. Gibson rents the land, and although used it is not now a reserve for shearing purposes.

112. Then you think it is not open to any one to shear there?—I think not.

113. *Hon. the Chairman.*] In dipping, do owners use various kinds of dip, or do they generally use the same dip?—I think the rule is to use lime and sulphur.

114. Does the Inspector direct what kind is to be used?—I do not think he does. I am not sure. We have always used lime and sulphur, and that has been approved.

115. Are you aware of any case where other material has been used, and the owner having failed to clean his sheep expressed an opinion that the Inspector had ordered him to use that other material?—I do not know of it.

116. Do you think that the Act should prescribe a dip for scab?—I do think it is necessary.

117. What do you consider the best dip?—Lime and sulphur.

118. Experienced persons would use that dip?—Yes; it is always used in our neighbourhood; it is considered the best. There might be some improvement upon it, but I am not aware of any.

FRIDAY, 12TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. WALTER GIBSON, examined.

119. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I would ask you, first, some questions in regard to the working of the Sheep Act. You are the lessee of a sheep-run in the Province of Marlborough?—Yes, in the Kaikouras, in the Provincial District of Marlborough. The Warden, Tytler, and Jam are the names of these runs.

120. Is there scab on that run?—There is a little; there are three runs that are joined and worked together.

121. You say "a little." Have they been scabby long?—When first stocked the country

was clean; subsequently the run was scabbed from the coast runs. These lands would have been clean but for a large area, 3 7,800 acres, of Crown lands adjoining. These Crown lands were the cause of scab still existing on the runs held by me. There are wild sheep all over these Crown lands. There is a high bush country and rugged lands on the other side of the Kaikoura Range.

122. Do I understand you that the wild sheep come over the range?—Yes; they cross over the range in winter. It is very wet, cold land there; consequently they go over the range and come to my side. I have been doing all I can to kill sheep on Crown lands. There have been no efforts made on the other side to clear the bush; the Government have not taken any steps for that purpose.

123. Have you done any fencing?—Yes; but fencing gets broken down in winter by the snow. The high lands and creeks are covered with snow.

124. That is hardly an answer to my question. Have you done any fencing?—Yes, a large amount of fencing.

125. Could you not put up fencing that would stand?—That would depend upon the position. We do not construct fences except upon the tops of ridges. Even there, in some places, the snow breaks the fences down.

126. Have you been compelled by the Inspector to clean your sheep?—Yes, and I have constantly endeavoured to do so; and I would have succeeded but for the infection brought by sheep from the Crown lands. I have been dipping to July last, and am dipping the whole flock now, and constantly erecting fences, endeavouring to get rid of scab.

127. Have you been fined for not having your sheep clean?—Yes, I have been fined twice.

128. Have these fines been paid?—The first one was remitted, on account of my doing everything that was possible to eradicate the scab; for the second I have given a bond. The first fine was remitted to £5 and costs.

129. And the second?—On the second I entered into a bond to pay it in eighteen months if my sheep were not clean. I was to be called on to pay within eighteen months, and if the sheep were clean the bond would not be enforced.

130. What was the ground upon which the first fine was remitted?—Because I had used every effort to get rid of scab.

131. I suppose that was also the ground of the second one?—Yes.

132. What were the conditions of the bond?—I was to do everything the department might require me to do. I engaged to do everything the department asked me to do towards eradicating scab. I might be called upon to pay the fine at any time if I ceased making the efforts required by the department.

133. Suppose your sheep were not clean within eighteen months?—The bond would have been enforced.

134. The fact of your having put up fences would not have freed you from liability?—No; unless they were clean I should not be free from liability.

135. If at any time the Inspector thought you were not taking proper steps to clean your sheep, you were liable to be fined?—Liable at any time.

136. Do you know whether the same course was pursued in other cases?—Mr. Ingles's fine was remitted the first time.

137. Do you know the circumstances of that case?—No, I do not.

138. With regard to this bond into which you entered, and in which the fine was so far remitted, was it the Government direct or the Resident Magistrate that took the bond?—It was referred to the department for their opinion.

139. The Magistrate fined you in the first instance, and afterwards the bond was accepted?—I only know, as a matter of fact, that it was referred to the department.

140. Who was the Inspector?—Mr. Foster was in charge of the district.

141. Then, you attribute the continuance of scab on your run to the fact of these wild and scabby sheep coming down from the Crown and unoccupied lands?—I could cope with the ground on my side of the range; but wild sheep come down the other side of the range. It is a continuous thing: they come from the bush lands over the range.

142. Can you suggest any way which you think would be a proper way to get rid of these sheep: whose duty is it to get rid of these sheep?—It is the duty of the Sheep Department to compel persons holding leased lands to kill the wild sheep on leased lands.

143. Are these unoccupied lands?—No; they are leased lands. These wild sheep come from Crown lands. I have killed all the wild sheep I could that came from the bush land and the coast.

144. Then, you hold those gentlemen who hold leased Government and bush lands responsible for these wild sheep coming over?—Quite so.

145. Do any of your sheep go back?—The wild sheep go back in the summer-time.

146. Then, your sheep would bring the scab with them unless the country were fenced off. If I understand you rightly there is no fence so high up?—No.

147. You describe the scabby sheep as coming over the range to your side?—Yes; the wild sheep go to and fro.

148. You say your own sheep go back?—The sheep belonging to my country are bred there; they do not go back; they stay there.

149. Then do you say that none of your own sheep go back?—Sometimes one or two might go back.

150. Where do you shear?—At the reserve.

151. Which side of the range is that?—On the coast side. There are only very high and dangerous bridle-tracks to give access to the Clarence runs; it is mountain land.

152. How do you get to the reserve?—I drive the sheep over the range for that purpose. The reserve is leased to me.

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

muster from the outside country?—I have had the run divided into four blocks. A portion of the back block is not fenced; the other run is fenced off and divided into two blocks, irrespective of the reserve.

181. Roughly, how many acres?—About half the run is completely in paddocks.

182. That is, about fifty thousand acres securely fenced?—Yes.

183. Free from being broken?—Some fences are broken by the snow. It is a rough and high country. Some fences on the ridges are broken down.

184. Have you been stopped from breeding?—Yes; we were stopped last year from putting in rams.

185. Are there any wild rams there?—There are some that come from the Crown lands; but we kill them as far as we can. We have men engaged destroying these wild sheep on the Crown lands now.

186. You say you work these three blocks together?—Yes.

187. Would it not lessen your risk of scab being perpetuated if you worked the runs from different centres, instead of ever massing your sheep together?—We are obliged to do the shearing across the range; it is a high range; there is no possibility of avoiding it. We have lost no less than eighteen pack-horses within thirty-four months; that is the only means of access we have.

188. Have there been no sheep shorn except on the reserve?—There is no other way across.

189. You say it is not possible to shear on the runs themselves?—No, inasmuch as we cannot pack sufficient. There is no timber in this country; the tracks are very high and dangerous.

190. Do other runholders make use of this reserve?—No; it is held under lease, the same as the other runs.

191. You consider that section 23 bears unfairly on the sheepowners, inasmuch as it fines them, notwithstanding their having done all that the department wished them to do?—There is no man but wishes to cure his sheep if he can; more especially when he spends enormous sums of money for that purpose. I should have been rid of it long ago if it had not been for these Crown lands.

192. Do you know of instances where scab had returned in spite of all the sheepowners could do in securing their boundaries?—My neighbour, Mr. Bullen, has been for fourteen years cleaning his country, with ample means. We have been doing all we can in every way. It will take longer to do it in a rough country like that of mine.

193. You speak of cases where the sheepowner complies with all the requirements of the Inspector; how would it be possible for the Inspector to be satisfied that every sheep was mustered; in other words, how can the Inspector be satisfied that the sheepowner has done his utmost in the way of mustering his sheep to clean them? Would he not be dependent on the sheepowner's assurance: if that is so, what value can you attach to the sheepowners having assured the Inspector that everything was done which was required?—There may be cases of men being so stupid as not to use every means for their own interest to stamp the scab out; but men who know their business will use every effort for that purpose. Every one must see that the Inspector is doing his duty, and must approve of his doing it.

194. If, as I put it, the Inspector is dependent on the sheepowner's assurance, does it not follow that the Inspector can be sure of nothing, except by judging of results, as to whether every effort has been made or not?—It would be impossible for the Inspector to be at every dip. As a rule, they are going about the runs in our neighbourhood continually inspecting sheep and seeing what is going on.

195. Do you mean to tell the Committee that the Inspector can satisfy himself as to any sheep that has been got in, or of the actual dipping of every sheep from first to last?—It would be impossible, unless he were on the ground always.

196. And then could he?—I think a practical man could. He could not follow the shepherds, but if the sheepowner paid good wages he could secure trustworthy shepherds.

197. He would not follow the shepherds?—We are all in the hands of the shepherds for that.

198. You have said that men might be ruined, and then the country would remain scabby, no good being done?—Yes, quite so. It is far better to see that the owners of runs are doing their utmost towards cleaning their flocks. By aiding them in every way the Government would be doing its duty.

199. Did you not mention that insufficient capital was in many cases the cause?—Yes; there are some owners that have not the means of doing more than they are doing.

200. In the event of some of these men with insufficient capital being ruined, is it not likely that they would be succeeded by men with sufficient capital?—It is a very rough country. Many would not take runs there. It would require very large sums to clean that country.

201. I do not think you have answered my question exactly. I will put it again: In the event of some of these men with insufficient capital being ruined, is it not likely there will be men of sufficient capital to succeed them?—I know this, that, with my experience, if I had double the value of some of the scabby runs, I would keep the money, and not invest in those scabby runs.

202. *Hon. Capt. Fraser.*] When did the Government lease this shearing reserve, to whom, and for what period?—I cannot tell off-hand: the lease is for fourteen years.

203. To whom?—To Mr. Joseph Ward.

204. For a period of fourteen years?—Yes.

205. When did they first lease it?—I do not know the date; there are four years to run, so that it is ten years ago. I do not know the exact date.

206. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] As I understand it, your sheep, or a portion of them, have been running on land that has not been substantially fenced?—Yes; there is a portion that we are now fencing.

207. Has any information been laid against you for allowing sheep to run on unfenced land?—Only six sheep, as I have mentioned, strayed away in three years.

208. Under clause 27 of the Sheep Act, as you are aware, it is imperative on the owners of infected sheep to herd their sheep or keep them within lands substantially fenced, otherwise they are subject to a penalty of not less than 3d. nor more than 5s a head?—I believe it to be impossible to herd the sheep.

209. I am not asking that. I asked you whether any information had been laid against you?—No.

210. Then, as far as you are concerned, the Inspector has systematically neglected his duty with reference to you?—It was physically impossible to herd them.

211. That is not the question: it is the duty of the Inspector to carry out the Act?—I did, on one occasion, get an order to herd, but it was simply impossible to do so.

212. Do you think that, under this Act, the Inspector has a dispensing power: is it your experience that Inspectors consider themselves to have a dispensing power with regard to the provisions of this Act?—There are certain provisions that it would be impossible to carry out. Under certain circumstances it is simply impossible: it could not be done unless there should be a clause to order the owner to take his sheep off the country altogether.

Hon. Mr. Waterhouse: Practically it amounts to that.

213. *Hon. the Chairman.*] How many sheep were you carrying when you had the Jam Run; I see here in the return for 1881, 44,000; for 1882, 40,000; and for 1883, 43,000?—That was previous to boiling down.

214. You were increasing very rapidly?—We increased one year, and we boiled down a large number in the autumn; we are reduced now to 40,000.

215. How many did you boil down?—Four thousand.

216. In dipping, what dip do you use?—Lime and sulphur.

217. Have you not used any other?—No; I do not believe in any others.

218. What quantity of lime and sulphur?—We use 1cwt. of sulphur and 60lb. of lime to 400 gallons of water.

219. *Mr. Lance.*] Do you attribute the whole cause of your still having infected sheep to the fact that wild sheep come into your country from the Crown lands?—Yes.

220. Now, can you give the Committee any idea of the steps that should be taken by the Inspectors or the Crown to keep off these sheep?—I think the Crown ought to help private individuals to kill wild sheep.

221. Would fencing be possible?—You could not prevent the fences being broken down; the snow will break them down.

222. One witness, you are aware, recommends fencing?—Fencing will help to muster in the summer, but in the winter time it is no use to us.

223. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Are you aware that scabby sheep running on unoccupied ground will either die or cleanse themselves within twelve months?—That is not my experience.

224. Do you mean that there are no stragglers?—My experience is that, provided the wild sheep were killed off, the country might be cleaned in twelve months, provided also the neighbours would keep their sheep strictly within fences.

225. *Mr. Buchanan.*] How many sheepowners have a frontage that is surrounded or bounded by this block of Crown lands which you say swarms with scabby sheep?—Three, Messrs. Ingles, Reese, and Collins.

226. That is a centre. If each of these three gentlemen had an area of land fenced in for sheep-paddocks, proof against sheep not infected (you are aware that some owners have been compelled to reduce their flocks; Mr. Moore, for instance, was compelled to reduce his flock in order to clean his sheep); if they were put in several paddocks; and if, in the meantime, the whole of the Crown and leased lands were scoured and the sheep killed; if the sheep kept in these several paddocks were then turned out, do you think that in all probability you would see the end of scab in a single season?—I doubt it; but by fencing in all the country that could be fenced, and keeping the sheep within those fences, and killing all the sheep on the outside country, the district might be cleared in twelve months.

227. Are you free in your own case as regards fencing to enable you to fence?—Yes, quite. My portion is clean which is fenced in; it is the portion that adjoins the Crown lands that has scab.

228. You are aware that Mr. Moore had to boil down 50,000 sheep in order to clean his flocks, and that Mr. Bullen was unable to clean his flock?—Yes, I believe so. He might have done so without, but I believe Mr. Moore would not employ sufficient shepherds.

229. Do you not think that a similar course would be capable of producing a similar result in the Kaikouras?—There is no difficulty if the sheep are kept within fences.

230. The same arrangement will hold in a country district?—I have known several gentlemen who cleaned their flock and got them infected again by wild sheep from unoccupied Crown lands getting through fences.

231. Did not the sheep on these Crown lands come from the runholders themselves?—In many cases I believe so.

Mr. W. K. CHAMBERS, examined.

232. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are a runholder in the Poverty Bay District?—Yes.

233. I understand you wish to bring before the Committee some matters in connection with the working of the Sheep Act. In your district the sheep are clean; that is, your district is not infected?—It is clean at present.

234. You have no sheep in the district actually scabby?—None whatever.

235. Has it been clean for some time?—Yes, for more than two years. We have a slight grievance up there in being compelled to dip sheep shipped to Auckland; but I am informed that that has, within the last few days, been attended to. Sheep arriving in Auckland, although coming from a clean district, had to be dipped within ten days; but I have received a telegram from the

Inspector, Mr. Thompson, to say that the dipping will not be required, so that our grievance is practically settled now. As the sheep had to be dipped as soon as they were landed, considerable loss was occasioned to the farmer, as the sheep were knocked about and damaged more than was at all necessary.

236. But you now think the question which you wished to raise before the Committee is settled?—For the present it is so. You will perceive that if sheep had a bad passage it would not be possible to slaughter them, as they would be quite unfit for freezing purposes. Having been so bruised and knocked about it would be useless to kill them until the bruises healed, when they might have to be dipped by the present regulations.

237. Do you propose any way of getting out of the difficulty other than the Act provides?—The officers who administer the Act, they say, cannot go beyond the Act itself. But I think there is a way of getting out of the difficulty where sheep are going from a clean to an infected district. I think that some such system as this might be adopted, viz., that vessels should have a license or clean certificate granted, and that, so long as the certificate holds good, sheep shipped by those vessels should be exempt from dipping if they are shipped from a clean port; unless, indeed, where they were put into infected yards after landing. Such a license might have effect as long as the ships were clean, but it should be cancelled if they carried sheep from an infected port.

238. Auckland is an infected district, you say?—Yes, and so is the West Coast; but the East Coast, from Hawke's Bay boundary, at Akiteo, to Poverty Bay Sheep District is clean.

239. In other respects you say the Act works well?—In its application to scab it has worked well. I believe it works well if put in force strictly by the officers appointed to do so. In Poverty Bay we had an excellent man, who eradicated scab in less than two years. Stock was running there under circumstances which made it very difficult to get a muster. He put the Act so strongly into force that he succeeded with the aid of the settlers in cleaning the stock. He strictly enforced penalties. In consequence of his action everybody did his best.

240. Were the fines ever remitted?—Yes, I think in one or two cases they were. Some heavy fines were however enforced, but some of these I believe were eventually remitted.

241. You have no other point to which you would refer?—What we wanted was to get stock from a clean district to an infected district without the necessity of dipping.

Hon. Mr. Williamson : I think that any law which was made for Gisborne would have to apply to the rest of New Zealand. You could not make any exception.

Hon. the Chairman : Unless the Committee should make such a recommendation.

242. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do the Poverty Bay settlers buy stock rams in Auckland?—Yes; a few are bought every year.

243. Then, a steamer carrying, as you suggest, clean sheep from Poverty Bay to Auckland, with a certificate, and on the return journey taking back a ram to Poverty Bay: what would you do in such a case as that?—Provision would have to be made for such a case. Would it not be possible, if sheep had been dipped within four or five days before going on board the ship, that the ship's certificate should hold good? Wethers from the West Coast might be dipped in the same way.

244. In other words, you would attach the disability to the infected district and not to the clean one?—Unless the clean sheep come within the range of the infection there is no necessity to dip them.

245. *Hon. the Chairman* : I think you said the Inspector in the district put the Act into force strictly and eradicated scab; who was the Inspector?—Mr. Orbell. He is now Inspector in the Wairarapa District.

246. *Mr. Buchanan.*] How long do you say it took to clean Poverty Bay?—Under two years; that is, he cleaned the district in two seasons.

247. I think it is difficult to muster in some parts of that district?—It is worse than other parts. We had to kill and shoot a great many sheep which could not be got in. More than one hundred were shot or run down by dogs the last year.

248. Generally, what do you find to be the feeling in regard to the Inspector now that the district is clean?—There is no feeling against Mr. Orbell on account of his being unduly harsh. I was fined myself once or twice. I think it was for my benefit, as well as those others who were fined, and for the benefit of the district. I would mention, if I might be allowed to do, the extraordinary fact that Auckland, which is the easiest district to clean, is still scabby and has been scabby for some years.

249. The same is true of Wanganui?—It is some grievance to us that, while Poverty Bay is a clean district, in the Auckland District there remains scab.

250. *Hon. the Chairman.*] If Auckland were not scabby you would have no difficulty?—None.

Hon. Mr. Williamson.] The difficulty with regard to Auckland is that they get their sheep from all parts. I had a case of scab myself that was got from some sheep that were sent for slaughter. They were not able to kill them, and the whole of them went to the public slaughter-yard. They were clean in the Waikato.

251. *Mr. Lance.*] Have you any experience as to rabbits?—No, I am happy to say.

Hon. the Chairman : Mr. Chambers, I might mention, is Chairman of the County Council. I do so because, in giving evidence, his evidence, being Chairman of the County Council, would have greater weight than if he were a private individual.

The Hon. G. R. Johnson.

18th September, 1884.

SIR,—

With reference to the inquiries being made before the Committee on sheep and rabbits, I should like to state that in my opinion the only dips allowable by law for the eradication of scab should be "lime and sulphur," or tobacco. I have tried some of the most highly recommended patent dips, and have found them quite useless. I am sure that no cold dip is to be depended on.

It may be of some use if I describe my method of mixing the lime and sulphur. Instead of mixing the lime and sulphur in the old-fashioned way, by boiling them together, I first put the lime into a tank of water, thoroughly stirred and mixed it, and as soon as the water became clear it was run into the boiler, and when the boiling point was reached the sulphur (moistened) was put in. In five minutes the whole of the sulphur was dissolved and the dip fit for use.

The advantages of this system are: first, that by having a saturated solution of lime you insure the complete dissolving of the sulphur; and, secondly, there is a great saving of time and fuel by the absence of sediment in the bottom of the boiler.

I have, &c.,

W. K. CHAMBERS.

WEDNESDAY, 10th SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. W. A. Low, examined.

252. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are, Mr. Low, in a position to give evidence in regard to the working of the Sheep Act?—Yes.

253. Where do you reside?—At the St. Helen's Station, in the Amuri country.

254. Is that the Waiiau?—It is the southern part of the Province of Nelson, next to Canterbury.

255. In this return there are two districts, or rather one district divided into two districts?—The district is known as the Amuri Subdivision of the Marlborough District. It comprises the southern portion of Nelson to the Waiiau River.

256. What extent is your run?—About a quarter of a million acres; mostly Crown land.

257. Have you any diseased sheep in your flock?—No.

258. Are there any in the neighbourhood?—Every run in Amuri has now got a clean certificate. I bought my run about seven years ago. The whole of the sheep were then scabby. They are now clean, and have been so for the last two or three years.

259. Who is the Inspector in your district?—Mr. Clifton is Inspector, unless he has been replaced by Mr. Cook.

260. I thought there was a Mr. Foster?—Mr. Foster is what is called "Inspector in charge." This is a term unknown to the Act, but we have a local sub-Inspector. Then there is the Superintending Inspector, Mr. Bayly. There is then the Secretary to the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Cooper, who, I understand, is practically chief of the department.

260a. Mr. George Cooper?—Mr. George Cooper.

261. Have you any knowledge of the adjoining districts?—I have a run—a portion of my property—which is in Marlborough. It adjoins a run that has been scabby up to a very few months ago.

262. There is a great deal of scab in that district, I believe?—No. There is none in the Amuri. In the Marlborough County there is scab. The Amuri is the only subdivision that is clean.

263. Can you say how the Act has worked in these districts?—Last year (1883) certificates were granted by the department to the station which joins mine on the north; also to the Molesworth Station, which joins me on the north-east. The Molesworth Station is in Marlborough County. The certificate was granted to Tarndale on the 26th of May. On the 28th May, the Tarndale shepherds began to kill scabby sheep. This came to the ears of the then local Inspector, Mr. Scaife, who paid a visit to the station, and the manager admitted he had killed some scabby sheep. The local Inspector communicated the fact to the Inspector in charge, Mr. Foster. Both, I think, represented the matter by telegraph to the Superintending Inspector, Mr. Bayly. They wanted to know whether, in the circumstances in which these sheep had been killed, the run should be declared an infected run. Mr. Bayly, I was told, was absent for about two months travelling about the country. The local Inspector could get no reply in respect to this run during all that time. In the meantime none of the neighbours had been advised that scabby sheep had been killed on this run. We were all living in ignorance of the danger to which our flocks were exposed. On the 24th of August, I think, and nearly three months after the Inspector discovered that this man had been killing scabby sheep, a muster was made, and they found one other scabby sheep. It was then notified that scab was in the run. The manager was had up.

264. Who did you say granted the certificate?—The local Inspector.

265. *Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore.*] What might be the name of the local Inspector?—Mr. Scaife; he has, I believe, left the service.

266. Where was the conviction?—At Waiiau.

267. Before the Resident Magistrate?—Before the Resident Magistrate.

268. Could you say where these sheep came from?—They were found on a portion of the Tarndale Station.

269. Were they wild sheep, or sheep not in the muster?—They were stragglers that had been left out. The Inspector told me that the Tarndale shepherds suspected there might be some scabby sheep in that part of the country. They found, I think, twenty or twenty-five; when the Inspector made a muster again, in the end of August, there was one. The certificate was cancelled. A similar experience took place as regards the Molesworth Station. A certificate was granted, and sheep were afterwards found to be scabby. For a long time no one knew anything of it. When the manager was prosecuted he was fined £25 in one case, and £5 in the other, for allowing these scabby sheep to stray. The scab was discovered very shortly after the certificates were obtained; and proper notice of this was not sent to me; and this I reported to the department, but there was no prosecution.

270. *Mr. Lancé.*] They got the certificates within the time prescribed by the Act?—Yes.

271. *Hon. B. Campbell.*] And almost immediately afterwards scab appeared?—Yes; scab appeared.

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 Tarnedale 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.

291. *Hon. the Chairman.*] It has been stated that the season is a bad one?—I do not think so. I think that is all pretence; for Hopefield, Tarndale, and Molesworth Stations, all high country, have cleaned. It is so stated in the report. I have seen it so. Mr. Gibson's sheep are said to have always been scabby for twenty years.

292. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] And after these fines have been absolutely inflicted, have the fines been recovered?—I have been informed that they have not been recovered; but I have been told that a bond has been taken, which may be exacted under certain circumstances.

293. *Hon. the Chairman.*] The Government chooses the course to be taken for recovering the amount of the bond?—I think it is against the law to take this bond.

294. But, in Canterbury, the ordinary bond was allowed, and a person being fined might insist on his bond being taken?—There is no mention of a bond within the four corners of this Act. I do not blame the Inspectors for that. The Inspector has to sue. The Magistrate inflicts the fine, and the Government lets the defendant off. The Government is, in such case, to blame.

295. I think there was a case against Mr. Gibson about eighteen months or two years ago, the Resident Magistrate recommending that the fine be remitted?—If the Resident Magistrate recommended the remission of the last fine he inflicted, I think he did so against his will.

296. Has there been any joint attempt to clean the district as against those sheep from Crown lands?—I cannot say whether all the neighbouring runholders in Marlborough have joined. I myself sent six shepherds last year to muster the Crown lands in the Amuri county. I cannot speak as to Marlborough.

297. *Hon. Mr. Nurse.*] I am informed that the snow breaks down the fences?—The only way I know to get rid of these sheep is to employ men to follow them up systematically and kill them. When the snow comes down it buries the fences, so that the sheep can walk over them.

298. *Mr. Buchanan.*] In the cases of the Tarndale and Molesworth, do you know that the declaration under Schedule B was signed; was there any prosecution for false declaration?—There was a difficulty in bringing the charge home.

299. Section 24 says that a penalty of not less than £10 nor exceeding £50 shall be inflicted, and not exceeding £10 for every twenty-four hours for which an owner fails to give notice. I understand you to say that in the case of Tarndale there was only £10 inflicted, the penalty for one twenty-four hours?—There was a month without notice nearly, and he ought to have been fined £10 a day. The Magistrate only fined him in the penalty of £10, which was illegal, I think. On the 26th of May he got his certificate; on the 28th of May he killed scabby sheep.

300. What is your opinion as to the local management of the Scab Act—that is, the local administration of the Act, as compared with what is known as the "Central management"?—Do you mean leaving it to a local Board?

301. Yes.—I do not believe in that. I think you want a strong arm from the centre.

302. What do you think as to the efficient means which should be taken? Are you of opinion that the owner of sheep should be tied down to actual results, leaving him to judge for himself as to what means are sufficient for effecting a cure?—I think it would be best to come to an understanding as to what is an effective dip. Lime and sulphur is an effective dip and the cheapest dip known. I should like it stated in the Act that all persons having scabby sheep should be compelled to dip them with sulphur and lime.

303. Has there any case occurred of a certificate being refused until the Crown lands should be fenced off?—There has been no case of that sort so far as I am aware.

304. Are you of opinion that the Crown should take steps to clean those lands?—I think something should be done in the interest of all those who are around them. Many of those persons, although they are also strongly interested, are not well able to spend any money for the purpose. The whole of the country south of the Waiiau is a clean district. All sheep passing from the north of the Waiiau have to be dipped twice at the cost of the owner.

305. *Mr. Lance.*] I would ask a question with regard to these Crown lands, whether these lands, which are for the most part on the tops of the ranges, are not under snow for several months of the year, and whether Mr. Low thinks it possible sheep could live on these Crown lands during these winter months?—During heavy frosts and snow the sheep would naturally find their way down to the lower ground and into the bush.

306. During the winter months no sheep could live on these Crown lands?—I think it is extremely probable that every sheep on these lands would descend necessarily to the low ground, and when the snow cleared off they would go back.

307. Would that be the best time to destroy them?—I think it would. I do not think it would be a difficult thing to kill all the sheep on Crown land.

308. Suppose these sheep were killed off when the snow clears away, even so the process would have to be repeated every year?—A man can follow these sheep wherever they go. Give a man £1 or £2 a head, and he would soon clear them off. I know one case of an employer doing this with the best result. Give any man who is expert with a gun a reasonable sum, and he will soon be able to give a good account of the wild sheep on a run.

309. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] You think that Mr. Bayly is a competent man for this kind of employment?—I know that he is anxious to do his best.

310. Has he the requisite experience or knowledge?—Mr. Bayly, so far as I know, never had the management of any station in New Zealand; but he told me that he had been brought up among sheep in some capacity, although not having the management.

311. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Is there any further suggestion which you would like to make?—There is one clause—clause 25—which I notice has not been enforced in our district. That is one of the clauses which the Inspectors have taken upon themselves to abrogate, refusing to act or prosecute under this clause and under clause 26.

312. Will you mention a case?—I have mentioned the Tarndale case. We have only had two scabby runs in our district lately.

313. You complain that the clause you mentioned has not been enforced; do you recommend that it should be put in force?—Yes.

314. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Do you think that if clause 26 were enforced that Marlborough would be clean?—Indeed I think so: I think it would have been clean years ago if that clause had been enforced.

315. We have seen it somewhat otherwise in Canterbury. I have been informed by a gentleman that if the clause had been strictly carried out he would have been ruined; and he was one of the wealthiest men there?—I can quite understand that. A good many sheepowners do not really understand their own interest in this matter. They think they escape evil consequences. Nevertheless they are ruining themselves indirectly. But it is not only themselves, but other owners that are injured. I also made a notice of the 27th clause, which refers to herding sheep and yarding them if they are scabby.

316. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What would you remark about that?—If you turn to clause 45 you will see that if any person by himself or his agent negligently suffers any scabby sheep to stray, the penalty shall be so much. The department, I find, experience some difficulty in convicting people because they were not able to prove that they had “negligently suffered” their sheep to stray. In order to get free of the difficulty, the Inspector took the precaution of giving the notice mentioned in clauses 27 and 28. In order to pin down any person they may have to prosecute so as to prevent all chance of escape, they previously give him notice to “herd and yard” his sheep, so that if any sheep are found outside the boundaries of his run, the owner must have necessarily “negligently” allowed them to stray. But I was going to mention that it was practically impossible to enforce herding and yarding in cases of large flocks, and the Inspectors, in some cases, after giving the notice, had said to the owner, “If you keep a good boundary I shall not insist upon your herding and yarding.” Hopefield Station got such a notice. The boundary in this case was the Waiau River, and the manager proved in Court that he kept a man to prevent the sheep getting across, but in mustering one sheep was driven across the river on to Mr. McArthur’s run, and for this, under the above arrangement with the Inspector, the Hopefield manager was fined £20. When I said the Inspectors had been in the habit of taking liberties with the Act, this was one of the liberties.

317. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Exactly; and it is one of the very grossest liberties that could be taken.—With reference to clause 46, I think it is a very great mistake to allow sheep to pass through an infected run in high country. A snow-storm may come on at any time. The sheep may stray all over the place. The shepherd will not be able to look after them properly in a snow-storm. The sheep will not remain on a strange run, but will stray to the adjoining runs, making their way back to the run they came from. It is, in my opinion, an extremely dangerous thing to allow sheep to be driven through an infected run.

318. *Mr. Buchanan.*] The Inspector has it in his discretion, and he will take precautionary measures?—I have known sheep driven across an infected run without proper precautions being taken.

319. I will put this case to you; sheep cannot get to Wellington without coming through the pass. They are grazing all round the foot of a run which has got infected: what would you do in such a case as that?—You observe they must come through the pass in order to get to Wellington. If a large mob of sheep are passing through a valley with infected sheep on both sides scab may be taken off the infected run, or an infected sheep may join the mob being so driven.

320. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You would recommend that the 46th clause should be repealed so as to prevent any permission being given?—So far as our district is concerned I would like to see that 46th clause excised.

321. I quite agree with you too.—Then as to clause 57, with respect to mustering notice, it does not fully meet the necessities of the case. The Act ought to be altered as regards this clause so as to prevent men who are likely to break the law from mustering sheep, putting them together, and drafting them inside or outside the yard, until at least forty-eight hours to seventy-two hours previous notice of such intention to muster and draft has been given to adjoining neighbours.

322. *Mr. Buchanan.*] To prevent wool sorting you mean?—Yes. There has been a great deal of that done. Before the Inspector or neighbours come, the sheep have been drafted inside or outside the yards, and I think there ought to be a heavy penalty for an act of that sort. Twenty-four hours, I think, is too short notice. It ought to be forty-eight hours at least. It is a great inconvenience at shearing time to get notice over night and have to start a man off in the morning. I should like to see the notice extended to at least forty-eight hours. The only other clause in which I have to remark is clause 62. In those cases in which the law has been abrogated, as I have stated by the Inspectors, they ignore that clause as well as the clauses I have mentioned—viz., clauses 26, 27, 28.

MONDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. G. F. BULLEN, examined.

323. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are a sheepowner?—Yes; in the Kaikoura District.

324. That is an infected district?—Yes; it is an infected district.

325. And has been so for some time?—Yes; ever since I have been there.

326. Is your run an infected run?—I had a certificate the last four years, until three months since. It is now practically an infected run.

327. Your neighbours are also infected?—Some of them. Mr. Gibson is a neighbour on one side; Swyncombe is also a neighbour; Mr. Smith is also a neighbour: but I am bounded by a good many neighbours.

328. With regard to the infected flocks, do you think that all proper means have been taken to clean them?—I do not think so.

329. Will you state in what way?—Persons have been allowed to drive scabby sheep. You can

see on the map a neck of land; in the centre of this people have been allowed to drive scabby sheep.

330. What neck of land do you refer to?—The shearing reserve.

331. Could you show it on this map?—The district map shows it more plainly.

332. Perhaps you could give us some idea of it on paper?—There is a large flat covered with manuka. [The witness drew a sketch of the position of the reserve.] Sheep are driven from the back country over the spur, and allowed to come on to the reserve. They are allowed to remain for a week or more. If there is no food for them it is impossible to keep sheep from getting through a wire fence.

333. Are you speaking of one person's run?—It is a reserve.

334. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] It is not a public reserve, as it is occupied by one man, who leases it?—There are other sheep that want to be shorn there.

335. How can that be if one person leases it? Do you know for how long he has the use of it: how much of the lease is unexpired?—He has five or six years yet to run, I believe.

336. *Mr. Lance.*] The lease, we are told, is for fourteen years. Has it not already run ten years?—

Hon. the Chairman: I may be allowed to state that I have received the necessary information from the Land Department on this point, and the lease will be laid before the Committee.

337. *Mr. Lance.*] Am I to understand that other people can shear there if they like?—The person that owns this has got the other runs as well, and there is only one person; but others can shear.

338. What is the area?—From seven to eight thousand acres.

339. And how many sheep has he to shear?—Forty-two thousand, I believe.

340. In point of fact, all his sheep have to be shorn here?—Yes.

341. Are proper precautions taken to carry out the Act?—I say that proper precautions are not taken. The lambs are brought over to be shorn about the end of March. Most of them were shorn, but some remained. I gave the necessary notice of these sheep being there. Those that had been shorn were dipped, and some not shorn were found to be scabby. Some fine shorn lambs (small lambs) which no wire fence will hold, after they were shorn, got through. My manager begged to have them taken off the reserve. The Inspector spoke to him on the subject, and begged that they might be taken off. Every time when spoken to, Mr. Gibson said he would have it done; but there they remained.

342. He could easily have got them off?—I think so.

343. Do I understand you to say that the reserve is fenced?—

Hon. Mr. Williamson: He says that these little lambs get through without difficulty, and that such fences would be no protection against either clean or scabby sheep.

344. *Mr. Lance.*] Did you inform the Inspectors?—Continually. He was summoned, and the Court gave judgment against him on the ground of negligence. In two cases sheep got into Swyncombe; once into my country, and through them coming there my sheep became infected. There were three cases.

345. You say that three cases were brought against him: with what result?—Negligence was proved against him. He was fined £6 for one and £10 for each of the other two.

346. Did he pay the fines?—I think so.

347. Who is the Inspector?—Mr. Passau.

348. I thought it was Mr. Foster?—Mr. Foster is Superintendent-Inspector. The Inspector afterwards assured me that he had to go to the Greenhills, and he saw five sheep, one of them rotten with scab.

349. In that reserve?—Yes; Mr. Gibson had said that every sheep was off.

350. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] It was given in evidence by Mr. Gibson that he had six sheep which got out in six years, and they were clean?—These were different sheep altogether from those I am speaking of. Those that he speaks of referred to the case proved against him.

351. Do you consider that proper efforts have been made to clean the flocks adjoining those you refer to as affected?—No; I do not think the Act has been carried out at all. By the Act of 1878 we all had notice that we must clean our sheep in three years. Before this we had notice that the Act was coming into force. In 1878 we all determined to clean our sheep; but the Act was then taken to apply to the whole of the colony. We and the Amuri spent a great deal of money to clean our sheep, but all this expense was thrown away. Others did not attempt to clean their sheep. I cleaned my sheep. My neighbours had the benefit of this. They got the operation of the Act put off for three years. I hoped to see the Act then come into force, but they petitioned, and got the Act put off for twelve months longer. Had the Act as proposed by the Government been brought into force, we would be in a different position.

352. *Hon. the Chairman.*] The Act provided that it should not come into force in the Marlborough District for two years?—Three years; and they then petitioned to be allowed a further period of twelve months.

353. What was the reason for that?—I forget the reason, except it was that they could not possibly clean their sheep. The fact was they never attempted it. They never put up a chain of staunch fencing. We put up over one hundred and fifty miles of fencing.

354. You say the Act came into force for their district at the end of four years?—Yes; at the end of four years.

355. Do you think it is efficiently carried out now?—No, I do not.

356. Will you point out in what respect it is not carried out efficiently?—At the time of these Police Court cases being heard, Mr. Foster, the Inspector, told me that in their neighbourhood they had not touched their scabby sheep for five months. If such was really the case, we want an alteration.

357. In what respect?—If the existing Act will not insist upon people who have scabby sheep mustering and dipping, the law should be altered for that purpose.

358. To whom was this statement made?—To me.

359. By whom?—By Mr. Foster.

360. Whose fault was that?—It was the Scab Inspector's.

361. He did not, then, follow the Act?—If a man has scabby sheep he ought to be compelled to muster and dip them, no matter what might be the consequences.

362. Is there not power to punish a man having scab in his flock for not giving notice?—Yes; but when all his sheep are scabby it is no use.

363. In the case of a scabby flock, is there not a provision that they shall be taken out to clean within a certain time?—But it has not been done.

364. Do you know any reason why the Inspector has not done it?—No.

365. Are there Government lands in that neighbourhood: there are unoccupied lands in that neighbourhood?—They do not join me at all. There are unoccupied lands there, but I do not know to what extent.

366. You are referring to Mr. Ingles's run?—Joining his run there are, I think, unoccupied lands. It is between Mr. Ingles's and Mr. Gibson's.

367. Do you know whether there are scabby sheep on these lands?—I think it likely.

368. You do not know personally?—No; I do not know personally.

369. It is stated that there are scabby sheep on these lands, and that that is the cause of those other lands being infected; and it is further stated that it is impossible to get rid of these sheep. Do you think it is possible to get rid of these sheep?—I think it is quite possible. These Crown lands are very high country: they are covered with snow at the present time. As the Government charge no rent for these so-called Crown lands, I think those who have the benefit of all these lands—all those who pay no rent—ought to clear the country of these scabby sheep.

370. It was suggested here that the Government, in cases like that, should act the part of landlord to his tenants; that they should fence those unoccupied lands, and then charge the pastoral tenant a percentage on the money so expended. Do you think that a good suggestion?—I think it would be a great expense to the Government. The Government would have to be continually mustering the country; no matter how good the fencing, sheep will get inside.

371. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] You think there is very little chance to clear that part or any part of the country of scab until the flocks around are all clean?—There is no chance whatever.

372. Then, Mr. Bullen, do you consider that the Sheep Act is not worked satisfactorily in your district: is that on account of the Inspectors not having it put into force properly? Have you any suggestions to make as to the working of the Act, or amendments to propose in the Act?—There is one thing I would particularly like to suggest, that is, that infected sheep should not be allowed to travel.

373. Section 46 provides that no sheep should be driven through any infected country. Are you speaking of infected sheep being moved? Do you think the proviso is a good one or not?—I think it is a question of danger for the clean flock to pass through infected country. Sheep are almost sure to pick up scab there although perfectly clean before. One may get away by accident. Wherever it came from it will try to get back there again, and so will carry scab with it.

374. Then, you think no sheep should be allowed to travel?—With regard to the case you were mentioning, the Greenhills, that was all a legal run, and therefore you would not call that "travelling sheep." That is the difficulty. If any sheep were driven to or from the Greenhills down to Swyncombe, if they get through the fence they are bound to carry back scab to Greenhill from the reserve.

375. I would draw your attention to sections 27 and 28, which provide for infected sheep being herded and yarded by shepherds. Are these sections, as far as you can observe the working of the Act, properly carried into force?—They are not carried into force in our district.

376. Do you know of any reason why they should not be?—I think it would be almost impossible to carry them out in that rough country.

377. I would draw your attention to section 57: it has been objected that that is not quite stringent enough. It provides that persons mustering sheep for certain purposes must give notice to neighbours. Suppose they were mustering for other purposes than those specially mentioned, could they do so without giving notice?—I do not quite understand your question.

378. Under that section, if you are going to muster for cutting or branding, they must give notice to neighbours, but suppose they are not mustering for that purpose, and therefore do not give notice, can they muster and deal with their sheep without having given such notice?—We do not give notice unless at shearing time. Where the runs are fenced they do not give notice.

379. It has been objected to that clause that it is wanting in this respect: that, while it names certain purposes for which persons mustering must give notice, it leaves it open to persons that muster their sheep for other than these particular purposes whether they will give notice or not?—Were scab, is the law cannot be too stringent. Persons should be compelled to give notice in all cases where scab is.

380. Do you consider that neglect on the part of many flockowners to clean their sheep necessarily works a hardship upon those who comply with the law?—Necessarily so. In my own instance this caused me very serious loss. I have a very large piece of country, over five thousand acres; I have paid for the run; and under other circumstances I could stock it all the year round, but that I am afraid to do so. I have another piece of 15,600 acres, which I cannot stock on account of my neighbour's scabby sheep. Therefore it is a very great hardship on me. My neighbour adjoining had 27,000 acres, which he only stocked two years ago. He and the previous owners held it for sixteen years without putting stock upon it.

381. In the case of infected runs changing hands, how is the incoming proprietor treated: does he get time to clean, or is he treated as having been the owner of infected sheep?—He should be treated as the owner; he should get no time.

382. You do not know what has happened in cases of that kind?—No.

383. The number of infected sheep has increased in your district?—Yes.

384. Do you know any reason to induce you to think that is on account of the season?—I think it is owing to the mismanagement of that country.

385. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] I shall simply ask the witness what I think is apparent, whether he thinks that if the Sheep Act were rigorously administered it would clean the country?—I do think so.

386. That it is through the want of that rigorous administration of the Act that scab has not been stamped out?—

387. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Who is to blame for that?—I think the Inspectors are to blame.

388. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] You say that scabby sheep do pass from Gibson's shearing reserve to your clean run: did you complain to the Scab Inspector?—I gave immediate notice.

389. Could he have herded by day and yarded by night?—There were only a few stray sheep on this country. They could have been slaughtered.

390. They were neither herded by day nor yarded by night?—No; nothing of the kind.

391. He received orders to do so?—Yes; he continuously received orders.

392. Are you of opinion that the Sheep Inspector was omitting a part of his duty in not having ordered Gibson to herd and yard?—

Hon. Mr. Williamson: The witness said the Inspector did order, but that Gibson did not attend to it.

393. Did he fine Gibson for not obeying his orders?—There were three instances where sheep got out through the fence on to his neighbour's run. He was fined for these; the case proved against him was negligence.

394. Was it not the duty of the Sheep Inspector to muster the sheep himself?—I think so.

395. He failed to do so?—Yes; he failed to do so. There was also a case of boiling-down. Once my manager was coming down when he saw a boundary-shepherd, who was looking after the fence, and having a number of young dogs. He saw him with a mob of sheep; there was a deep gully between them. The man was bringing the mob of sheep towards the fence. He called to Mr. Gibson's man (Gibson was not there) and told him what he was doing. The man was breaking in his dogs with a mob of scabby sheep on the fence. We all know that a young dog may easily cut off a scabby sheep at any time, and rush him through a fence into a clean run. I know that when Mr. Passan was in the district he said he could not get support. He wanted to carry the Act into force, but they would not allow him.

396. *Mr. Walker.*] Who are they?—His superiors.

397. *Captain Russell.*] Does that mean the Head Inspector or the department?—The Head Inspector.

398. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Who is the Head Inspector?—Mr. Bayly.

399. *Mr. Walker.*] Between the two, the Act cannot be carried into force against all?—Their influence with the department causes the Act to be loosely administered.

400. Is that influence exercised with the department, or with the Government?—With the Government.

401. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] How do you mean?—By their influence through the various channels.

402. *Captain Russell.*] Have you formed any opinion as to how long a time it will take to eradicate scab if the Act were rigorously enforced?—It depends upon how you go to work. I am satisfied that in some hands it could be done in eighteen months.

403. That would be under the most efficient system?—Yes.

404. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Has not Mr. Ingles been fined?—He has been fined.

405. And the fine has been enforced?—I believe so.

406. Mr. Gibson also has been fined?—Yes, he has been fined.

407. What was done in this case: was the Act carried out?—The fine was remitted and a bond was taken. The Government took a bond from him that he should expend the money in fencing.

408. What is the general rule among owners?—The dip, whenever it is necessary. We dipped seven times in the year; but I was determined that I would not keep scabby sheep.

409. Do you reduce your flocks?—We had 15,000 on a piece of country, and we reduced them to 10,000, then 5,000. We have now 15,000.

410. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You say that the country might be cleaned in eighteen months if the proper steps were taken?—If all these wild sheep were cleared off, and the old sheep boiled down.

411. It is stated that the difficulty of getting rid of these sheep on no man's ground is very great: do you think that the district could be made clean in eighteen months?—No man's ground is the tops of the spurs. Sheep from the lower country work up there after the snow has gone off. Sometimes the sheep of the country get mixed with the others.

412. If the country is understocked, will these wild sheep come down to feed?—Yes; they will come down like the others. If the country is overstocked, sheep are bound to spread to their utmost limits.

413. Is there any further remark that you wish to make as to the working of the Sheep Act in your district?—I think it is a shame that people owning scabby flocks should be allowed to breed with them. I think the Act should have been brought into force last year. The ewes are still having lambs. A very great injury is done to the neighbourhood by the results of this neglect.

414. You think the Act has not been carried out in this respect?—No, it has not been carried out in this respect. One man is told that he must not breed; another is allowed to do so.

415. Are not all told the same?—All are told not to breed, but the rams are not taken out.

416. In fact, the Inspectors do not see that their orders are carried out?—No.

417. *Captain Russell.*] Is there a sufficient staff to carry out the Act?—There are, in fact, too many Inspectors.

418. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Too many of bad quality, you mean. Who have you now?—Mr. Foster—he is under Mr. Bayly; Mr. Clifton—he is a new man in the district, having just come there; and we have a Sub-Inspector under him, Mr. Miles, who was formerly a policeman.

419. Was that a necessary qualification?—I cannot say.

420. *Mr. Walker.*] I would like to know where these gentlemen reside?—I think Mr. Foster resides at Amberley, Mr. Clifton is going to reside at Kaikoura, and Mr. Miles resides there also.

421. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] What is the object of having two Inspectors in one place?

422. *Mr. Lance.*] Miles was sent to look after the destruction of rabbits on Crown lands. He appears to have done that work very well.

423. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Then, because he was found to be very active, an additional service was required of him; hence he was made Sub-Inspector.

424. *Mr. Dodson.*] Clause 26, providing for separation of flocks, has not been carried out?—No; it has not been carried out.

Mr. H. A. INGLES, examined.

425. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You have had considerable experience in working the Sheep Act?—Yes; I have been fined several times: the Act was put in force against me, convictions were obtained, and I have paid a fine. I have cleared a certain part of the country.

426. How long have you had your run?—I have had it twenty-two years. There was no scab on it first for about four years after I had the run; but now, and from the present time going backwards, the run has been an infected run.

427. This Act came into force in 1878?—Yes.

428. The Act allowed you three years to clean your sheep, did it not?—That is one of the subjects of complaint which I have. It was understood at the time the Act was passed that it took longer to clean sheep in Marlborough, and time was allowed; but, practically, the whole colony got three years' grace.

429. Then, you say that you should have had a longer time?—Yes, I think so. We were the first men fined for having infected sheep. Mine was, perhaps, the roughest run in New Zealand, and could hardly be clean so soon as others.

430. Do you say there was no special grace given to your country?—To the best of my knowledge there was none in Marlborough: mine was the first conviction under the 23rd clause in Marlborough.

431. Do you complain of its not being put in force in other places?—I do not say that, but I say that the clauses which gave us time gave the rest of the colony time, and that practically we received no special benefit.

432. You think that, although persons should have been fined, they did not carry out the Act or lay information throughout the colony during the first three years?—They gave the whole of the colony the same grace.

433. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] You must be entirely wrong: Marlborough was exempted?—To my certain knowledge it was not carried out in Wellington; that I do know.

434. I know better than that: I know it was.—And I know it was not, and I can prove what I say.

435. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You think it a hardship that they did not give you a longer time than three years?—Yes.

436. Was that because you consider that it was more difficult to clean in your country?—Yes.

437. Were you taking steps during that period to clean your run?—Yes.

438. What steps?—I have always had the low parts of my country clean. Lately I have obtained a clean certificate. Although, practically, it was clean for eleven years, there are twenty thousand acres of bush on the run and adjacent to it, and I cannot get the sheep out.

439. Are you using that part of the run in summer?—I do not actually put sheep there, but they go there.

440. Cannot you prevent that?—No; it cannot be fenced. The Superintendent Inspector's letter bears me out. The Government sent a local Inspector, and he reported that it could be fenced for a small sum. I knew that was ridiculous. Then another came, and said it could be fenced for about double the expense mentioned by the first. And they sent another man (Mr. Foster), who said it could not be fenced at a reasonable outlay. His letter on the subject I produce.

441. Would it not rather be the question where you fenced: how low down?—It is still impossible; there are so many water-gates on these mountain torrents.

442. I understand that sheep in the bush are kept away by the sheep going from your flock?—We have always been killing in the bush.

443. Are they scabby in the bush?—To a certain extent.

444. What have you above that?—Snow.

445. Is it perpetual?—No.

446. There are Government lands—unoccupied lands—on your boundary?—Mr. Gibson, in the Clarence Valley, is on the other side.

447. Are there sheep on that land?—I have never known any to come from that land.

448. We have it in evidence that one cause of scab in the Clarence Valley was sheep coming off Government land?—I do not think that Mr. Gibson quite understood the question put to him. He imagined that the range side was Crown land. I have read his evidence, and I put the question to him whether he had ever known my ear-mark in his yards. He said he never knew of it. The fact is that my run is isolated. We never draft with any one, and no one with us.

449. What have you alongside of you?—The range is on one side of me.

450. Are you bounded by the sea?—I go to it at one place; north, is Waipapa; south, Kaikoura, and the clean portion of the run.

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.]

476. Was the Inspector wrong in his charge that you had scab in your run?—His charge against us was “that I had not taken reasonable means.”

477. Have any other steps been taken against you: has any other information been laid?—Yes; I had an information laid against me the other day, but the case was dismissed. I won the case on a legal point.

478. Section 27: is that enforced?—I think we received notice to herd and yard. It was impossible to carry it out. It was stated by Mr. Bayly, the Chief Inspector, that it would be as easy to go to the moon as to carry it out there.

479. What do you do with your surplus stock?—I have part running on a clean run; that is, the run is divided. I have part on two runs.

480. You treat the runs as two?—Yes, as two.

481. Have you a second homestead?—I intend to have one.

482. How is the one divided from the other?—By fences.

483. Do they make a distinction?—They gave me a clean certificate for the lower portion. I hoped to have the other homestead up before shearing-time.

484. Do you think they can act upon intentions?—They were forced to give me a clean certificate, as they inspected the sheep.

485. Have you a different wool-shed?—I have only had the certificate since July last.

486. Have you bred from that back portion?—There are wild rams there.

487. Have you not rams of your own?—I was only asked to take them out last year. I have not since returned them to the infected run.

488. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Are you aware if all the Inspectors of Marlborough had a knowledge of scab previously to their appointments?—I should think that some of them had not, but were drafted directly from the Police Force.

489. Are you of opinion that the Chief Inspector had been remiss in his duty in appointing persons under him who had no knowledge?—I do not think the selections have been at all happy. I do not think they are good enough men.

490. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] I should be glad to know how many sheep you have clean?—About fifteen hundred.

491. Are you still dipping outside?—Yes.

492. How many times?—Four times, sometimes five times, a year.

493. Are you able to make a pretty clean muster?—We do the best we can—usually about two-thirds of the sheep.

494. You only dip to get them tolerably clean?—I always get all I muster perfectly clean.

495. Then, you have no idea of cleaning them absolutely?—I said before that I do not think the run can be cleaned by ordinary means.

496. Then, you do so in a perfunctory way, to keep the Inspectors pleased?—I dip my sheep for my own profit; I do not consider the Inspectors in the matter.

497. *Mr. Walker.*] I think you said you did not mix with your neighbours, so that your scab is of your own manufacture, so to speak?—Not my manufacture, as I have shown you, but it is in my possession.

498. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You spoke of surplus sheep?—We have never sent sheep to Wellington, but at present the Wellington butchers seem to like to have sheep from this district.

499. How many miles of fencing must you have done to shut off this bush?—You cannot fence the bush, because it is intersected by watercourses at every half mile. No water-gate will stand them. I will read you what Mr. Foster, the Superintending Inspector, says on the subject: “I think it extremely doubtful whether such fences, with flood-gates at the extreme ends, could be maintained. I think that having fences in this position would but lull the country into a false security. They would not be proof against sheep in a wild condition.”

500. Would not the fact of having a fence there enable you to drive them to be slaughtered?—No; you would have to go to the main range. I do not say that no fence would do good. I am now letting a contract for several miles of fencing for holding and mustering.

501. What proportion could you fence in?—What I have got fenced in.

502. What proportion is that about?—One-fourth of the flock; but that would not be one-fourth of the area.

503. Would it be possible, with a sufficient staff of men, every one acting simultaneously, to destroy the bush sheep?—Yes; but it would take a little time. It would be easy to kill a lot of them off, but you would have to offer rewards as the sheep got less.

504. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] You state that recently you obtained a clean certificate for a portion of your run?—Yes.

505. When? For what length of time?—Since the 22nd July.

506. At that time, was not the whole of the run under one management and having one homestead?—Yes, it had been; only we expressed our intention of putting up another station.

507. You admit that at the time you obtained this clean certificate the run was under one management, having one homestead? Does it not appear to you that the Inspector having given you a clean certificate for the reason you now state shows that he was acting in opposition to an express provision of the Act?—That is not the interpretation put upon it by me.

508. Is it not sufficient to show that the Inspectors who would so act are unfit for the discharge of their duties under the Act?—I do not see it in that light.

509. Have the Inspectors a dispensing power, do you consider?—They exercise it; I do not know whether they have it. Everything is done according to the opinion of the Inspector.

An Hon. Member.] No, it is not. You will, I think, see that, in the opinion of some Inspectors, they have in effect a dispensing power, because the Magistrate has no option but to fine so long as the Inspector gives his opinion.

510. Are you not aware of the 66th clause of the Act, which states that it shall be the duty of the Inspector to lay a fresh information [reads]?—I take it there is a dispensing power; they need not do certain things unless they like.

511. Have you considered the 66th clause: that there is no option to the Inspector. He is bound to lay an information, and, if he does not, he is violating his duty?—The Resident Magistrate comes from another district; but it is quite uncertain when he comes. My last conviction was on the 10th December. I think the information was laid on the 14th August, but I cannot be certain as to the day.

512. How many informations were laid against you?—Three.

513. Are you of opinion that they lay the informations regularly, according to the provisions of the Act?—Yes; as near to six months as they can.

Mr. Dodson: There have been two amendments: one, I think, for twelve, and the other for nine months.

514. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Are penalties remitted as a matter of course?—No; the second was inflicted on me.

515. Are there many cases in the Province of Marlborough of the penalties being enforced?—No; I think in Gibson's and in two or three other cases the fines were not enforced.

516. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you any other remarks as to the working of the Act?—I think generally the Sheep Act is against justice. In English law a penal Act is to be construed in favour of the defendant; here it is in favour of the plaintiff. I cannot see why, when it is shown that a man is doing his best, that you should take money from him, and put it into the consolidated revenue. I think the least you might do is to leave it in the district.

517. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] You stated in the letter you read that there were two water-gates crossing the river?—These are two of the difficulties.

518. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Could not something be done by fencing off?—No.

519. What is the objection?—A cliff.

520. Could you not carry your fence to the top?—No.

521. You were saying, with regard to the 23rd section, that you thought it hard to inflict a fine when a person was doing his best: do you not think that a great many persons profess to be doing their best when they are not doing so?—The Inspector ought to know. He should have the knowledge of persons who do their best. My experience of them is that they have seldom any knowledge on the subject.

TUESDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. R. CORBETT, examined.

522. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are managing Highfield Station?—Yes.

523. That is in the Amuri District?—Yes.

524. Which is an infected district—that is, under the Act?—Yes.

525. Is your run infected?—No; we have been clean for five years; that is, in 1879 we got a clean certificate.

526. What is your experience of the working of the Scab Act?—It worked well, with the exception of a few holders who neglected to clean their land. Tarndale, St. James's, Hopefield, and all Mr. Lowe's country is clean. But when you get to the Kaikouras the Act seems to stop. Nothing was done to force Gibson to clean his run. He has been going on in the same way for years, not fencing; and the country cannot be cleaned without fencing. He has been convicted under the Act, but he has never been fined; consequently he has done nothing.

527. If I understand you rightly, your complaint is that it is put in force in one district, and has not been carried out in others?—Yes; there are 27,000 acres of land which we might have used if it had not been for the fear of scab. We might have used the whole of it, but were obliged to keep it idle altogether for fear of being infected by Gibson.

528. What was the position of the Highfields Run in April, 1878—that was the year the Act came in force?—We were clean in 1880.

529. Was the Act put into force immediately?—Yes; in our district it was.

530. It is stated that in one district it was not put in force: you are aware that there was an extension of three years granted to the Province of Marlborough?—Yes, I am aware that they had extension of time, but we went on cleaning. It was put in force among us, for Mr. McArthur alone paid £600 or £800 in fines.

531. What date was that?—I do not know the date.

531A. Can you state any reason why the Act has not been enforced in that particular district?—No.

532. Is there any reason why that country could not be cleaned?—I think it can be cleaned. It ought to be cleaned. It is as easy to clean it as it was to clean the other runs—St. James's and Hopefield for instance. I have not been over the whole of the country, but I have been over some of it. Gibson has a boundary-man employed on the fence between us, and we have one also.

533. Do you think that every effort possible has been made to clean Gibson's land?—I do not think it, for his sheep are becoming scabbier than ever they were.

534. How would you account for it?—Bad mustering, bad dipping, and want of fencing.

535. Is it the fault of the Act that the country there is not clean?—I think the Act is a good Act, and might be used with success to clean the country.

536. Then, you find fault with the administration of the Act?—Yes.

537. Are the Inspectors that are appointed capable of carrying it out?—When Mr. Foster was appointed it was thought there would be an end of scab in the Kaikouras. We thought he would put the Act fully in force: he said he would. We thought there would be no remission of fines.

538. Was there a remission?—Yes; they entered into a bond with Gibson, giving him eighteen months to clean his run. They allowed him to spend the fine in fencing.

539. Do you think Mr. Foster to blame?—I think he is to blame if he recommended a remission of this fine. If that fine had not been remitted I think they would have gone in to spend £5,000 or £6,000 on fencing of what was necessary to clean that country. Mr. Lowe was one who went in and spent a large sum. Mr. A. M. Clark, who cleaned Mr. Lowe's run, said there was no country in New Zealand which could not be cleaned. That was the result of his experience. That after cleaning Tairāwhiti and St. James's, there was no insuperable difficulty in cleaning any country in New Zealand.

540. Where Mr. Ingles's run is situated, is there not a very large quantity of bush, and therefore a great difficulty on that ground?—I have not been over that country.

541. You cannot say whether it is extremely difficult to fence it?—It is not fenced. It must be fenced to get wild sheep. We put men on, giving them £1 a head to get wild sheep.

542. How many of these wild sheep do you think there are altogether?—There are not five thousand in the district. If the Act had been put in force, Mr. Ingles would have fenced. His sheep would have been cleaned in a short time; and his profit would have astonished him when he got rid of scab.

543. Have you anything to suggest as a remedy for what you complain of, or any amendment of the Act to propose?—My wish is that the Act should be strictly carried out. Even we might be under it to-morrow for anything we know.

544. Will you explain to the Committee how you are affected by the scabbiness of the flocks in your district?—Pecuniarily?

545. Yes, pecuniarily?—We have held a clean certificate for five years, and we have never been able to send our sheep into Canterbury without being twice dipped and quarantined. The effect of that is to reduce the value of sheep, besides loss on the wool. We could get 1s. more for each sheep if it were not for this dipping, which costs 3d. a head. We have to pay for the dipping, besides our loss on the sheep.

546. What sort of quarantine is it?—It is wretched: they have no paddocks. We could not complain last year, for they allowed us to dip once on the station.

547. What is the charge?—Sixpence for the two dips.

548. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] You think that the Act ought to be administered strictly?—I do.

549. Do you think that the runholders generally are in a position to comply with that?—We did it.

550. Do you think it would not ruin a good many if the Act were strictly enforced?—It might. We had to go through it; Messrs. Lowe and McArthur had to go through it. There are only one or two men who have failed to carry it out—Messrs. Ingles and Gibson: why should they be exempted? I certainly think that the Act ought to be fully carried out.

551. *Mr. Harper.*] You cannot stock the whole of your country?—We have kept a large tract of land idle for five years through fear of scab if we stocked it. We paid £400 a year to the Government for it.

552. You could not stock it through fear of your neighbour's, Mr. Gibson's, sheep?—We have now put up a wool-shed and twenty miles of additional fencing. We have been put to great expense. It has cost us at least £3,000, besides loss of profit.

553. *Mr. Lance.*] You are on their boundary for six miles?—Yes.

554. And you consider your flocks in danger?—Yes; but we have a good fence, and two men on it.

555. Will you tell us what it costs to fence?—About £130 a mile. The country is very high. On the other side, between us and other runholders, we have a fence. That is on country 6,000ft. high, and is under snow all the winter.

556. You say that this fence is under snow all the winter. We have evidence which tends in the direction that fences under snow are no good, that they break down?—Yes; but they ought to be looked after and repaired. We have a man constantly repairing fences. We have two fences under snow in the winter. We put a man on whose duty it is to look to and repair them.

557. Would it have paid the whole district to have bought Mr. Ward out and have fenced in his run? Yes; you can only clean sheep by fencing.

558. *Mr. Harper.*] Mr. Gibson's run has never been clean?—No, it has never been clean since he took it. When Mr. Ward went out it was nearly clean; he had got it nearly clean. Mr. Gibson came into it as an experienced man; he was supposed to have great experience; but his sheep have been continually getting worse. If any one wished to see what a scabby sheep was, they should have gone over to Mr. Gibson's.

559. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You are aware that several runs in the Kaikouras lie alongside rough bush and Crown lands. Is it your opinion that, notwithstanding that fact, if the Act were put properly in force these people could easily clean their runs of scab?—Yes; but it will take much fencing, which requires money. They must then put men on to kill the wild sheep.

560. Do you know how many of these sheep there are?—I do not, but there are not so many as people think of. Macdonald, of Sherwood, told me that he had expected to get a thousand when he took possession, but he did not get three hundred.

561. *Mr. Dodson.*] Is it your opinion that the Government ought to assist in killing these sheep off?—I certainly think so. The runholders do not care so long as scab is got rid of. The sheep which cause the chief danger are mainly on Government land.

562. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Then, you think that, if the fencing clause were strictly enforced, the whole of that district would soon be free of scab?—I think so.

563. Do you think it possible to clean the country without fencing?—No, I do not think so. There should be at least a certain amount of fencing. There is a good clause under the old Canterbury Act, by which persons having scabby sheep had to keep them half a mile from the boundary of clean runs.

564. I would ask you some questions with reference to the 46th clause of the Act. That

clause allows a sheepowner, under certain circumstances, to drive through infected runs. Do you think that desirable?—No, I do not think it is desirable.

565. You think it objectionable?—I think it is.

566. Is yours a run that is infected?—We are called infected, but we have no scab.

567. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Are your sheep branded with the letter S?—No.

Mr. Buchanan: You are in an infected district.

568. *Mr. Lance.*] You have a clean certificate, therefore yours is not an infected run within the meaning of the Act?—No.

569. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you think that, under any circumstances, clean sheep should be driven through an infected run?—I certainly think they should not be allowed to go through and pass into a clean district.

570. It has been suggested that the clause in the Canterbury Act relating to this matter of the fine is better than that in the present Act; the clause I mean under which a bond is allowed to be given, instead of paying the money down?—I think that would not be an improvement. I think scab will be in the country for the next twenty years under such an arrangement. The whole thing will drag on as it did before. I do not think that half measures are of any use.

Sir NORMAN CAMPBELL, examined.

571. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are interested in sheep in the Amuri County?—Yes.

572. Will you state to the Committee your experience of the working of the Sheep Act?—Will you allow me to refer to my notes? The country in which I am interested at present is the Cloudy Range country. One run has engaged me a good deal. There was great pressure brought to bear to clean. I was asked to take charge, and I went down there and took charge.

573. *Mr. Lance.*] What year was that?—In the beginning of 1879. I took the management of Lyndon on the 17th March, 1879. We commenced operations by boiling down eight thousand sheep. We abandoned 35,000 acres. We mustered the sheep and found that they were badly scabbed. We abandoned that country, but it is now being completely fenced and worked again. A great portion is, I believe, stocked again. Some of it was lying idle for three or four years. The country itself is clean now.

574. You say the country is clean now?—Yes; but when I took charge there were between eight and ten thousand badly scabby sheep there. The only thing to be done was to get them and boil them down.

575. What sort of country is it?—It is rough country.

576. I suppose the leading range would be between four and five thousand feet high?—Yes.

577. You considered that abandoning these 35,000 acres was the best way of getting rid of infection?—We took the sheep off. I thought the best way was to kill them all off and boil them down. The Inspectors tried to persuade me to dip the sheep before boiling down. I thought it better not, and refused to do so.

578. That was on the run itself?—Yes. Then we killed nearly all our lambs that year by dipping sheep late in the winter. We went on dipping to the 18th August, right through the winter, and began shearing and dipping on the 9th October.

579. You were summoned?—Yes; we were summoned and fined, upon two charges, £450—£400 for not having the sheep branded with the letter S, and £50 for having no dip nor material. A private neighbour laid the information. The case was heard before Mr. Whiteford, and he fined us. The Inspector laid the information that we had no dip or proper dipping material. I pointed out that we had a most elaborate steam dip. Every one knew that we had a very good dip.

580. You were put to great expense?—We put up about fifty miles of fencing, while I was there, in fifteen months.

581. Were there any other runs scabby?—Yes; there was one which was very badly scabbed.

582. Were steps taken by the owners of these runs to get rid of the scab?—Yes; Mr. Lowe was working harder than we were.

583. Then, do you say the only exception at that time was Mr. Gibson: was he not cleaning his flocks?—I do not think he was doing anything. He did not bother me much at that time, as I was interested in other matters.

584. But you recognized the necessity that, so long as scab was in the district, the owner of every flock should be doing something to clean his flock?—It was, I consider, the duty of every one to go in at the same time and do what he could. That is what I complain of, that we should have been hunted down as it were—that all our exertions and money spent should be thrown away, and other persons be allowed to take it easy.

585. Do not the Inspectors try to enforce the Act in the cases of other persons?—They are not enforcing it now as strictly as they did five years ago against us.

586. Do you know the reason of that?—I do not know what is the reason why they should not.

587. Are those sheep of Mr. Gibson's still scabby?—I believe so. I have never been over Mr. Gibson's country.

588. There are unoccupied runs adjoining him?—I believe there are; all I know of that is simply hearsay.

589. According to your knowledge, do you think it impossible to clean scab?—I do not think it at all impossible. It is a question of money.

590. But if there is a country exterior to it, difficult to fence, on which it is very difficult to put sheep-proof fence?—No fence is a completely sheep-proof fence in time of snow.

591. It has been stated that it is impossible to put up a fence that will answer the purpose of keeping sheep, on account of the number of deep gullies and rapid streams in this case?—I do not think it impossible. You can fence almost any country now.

592. Suppose you had a country of that description, with ridges crossing these gullies, would it be possible to erect a fence nearly sheep-proof?—You could make it nearly sheep-proof. It would be necessary to have a man constantly repairing such fences—fencing a run such as Mr. McRae's, for instance. He has just such a fence as you speak of, crossing high spurs, and intersected by mountainous torrents. He simply had a man constantly looking after these fences. He went along the fence repairing everything. This man never did anything else. The Inspector pushed us at Lyndon to such an extent, that once he came to a flock which he said was endangering a neighbour; he said we must either remove them or dip them. He gave me the option to do as I liked. I got the sheep in and put them in another paddock. About ten days after he laid an information against us for not dipping, although he had given us the liberty to remove or dip them.

593. This would go to show that the Inspector was not carrying out the Act properly?—He certainly was not carrying it out. Either he ought not to have given the liberty or he should not have laid an information against us for using it. I think he got his instructions from Mr. Bolton. He told me I must either remove or dip. I said, if I had the choice, I would remove them, and he said I might do as I liked.

594. I suppose it was something like this: Mr. Bolton assumed that he had the power to do so, and then found that he had not?—That might have been the case when the Magistrate fined us for not having dip or material. My reason for not dipping was that there was another flock that was more scabby. I wanted to dip them first. It was simply a case of dipping the worst one first. I wanted the worst sheep dipped as soon as possible. We took delivery of the run on the 17th March, 1879. We got a clean certificate on the 30th April, 1880. These sheep had been scabby for twenty years. We were a little over twelve months in getting them clean. It cost a considerable amount of money. Mr. Tinline is not here. He could say what it cost him altogether.

595. It has been stated that if the Act were strictly enforced it would probably ruin several owners: do you think that should be a reason why the Act should not be strictly enforced?—Certainly not. I know of several people who have been ruined already by their endeavours to comply with the provisions of the Act. I know Mr. Otterson, who is now in these parliamentary buildings. I know what took place in his case. He had to get rid of his run. The Inspector told him that his run was a standing menace to his neighbours, and insisted upon his spending a large sum. The Inspector pushed him to go at the instant into very large operations. If Mr. Otterson knew that he could have an extension of time he could have held on to his run. I asked Mr. Otterson, when I saw him to-day in these parliamentary buildings, whether I might mention the circumstance, and he told me I might.

596. Which was his run?—Mount Gladstone; that is also a very rough country—it is crossed by high spurs. If Mr. Otterson was allowed time he would have been able to hold on for some time, until he was in a position to do what was necessary in the way of fencing.

597. Is that run clean now?—It is clean. If Mr. Otterson knew that he would be allowed to do as Mr. Gibson has been allowed to do—namely, spend the fines inflicted on him in putting up fencing—he would possibly have got through all right; but he thought he would be obliged to spend his money in fencing and be fined into the bargain.

598. At present I understand you to say that you are interested in another part of the country?—Yes; but what I contend for is: that after such exertions as we made to clean our country we ought to have derived some benefit from that.

599. Then, as far as I understand you, you wish to see the Act strictly carried out?—Yes; as long as it was strictly carried out it worked very well. There appears, however, to have been a certain interregnum, and it is now going back.

600. It is stated in Mr. Passau's letter that the bad season has something to do with it. What dip did he recommend?—Mr. Bayly says a great deal of the scab is due to the use of patent dips.

601. Has he not power to insist on a proper dip?—I do not think he has; for a time he recommended Little's dip, but it was with a certain reservation. He recommended it for lice and tick. It was for a long time advertised as being recommended by Mr. Bayly.

602. Do you know whether he tested it in any way?—I did not believe in it because it was used cold. Anybody could see that a cold dip could not be so effectual as a hot dip. But it was more convenient; it saved a great deal of trouble.

603. Are you in favour of giving power to Inspectors to recommend any dip?—No; I think any one who has experience must know that lime and sulphur can be the only certain means of cure. In this case the owners of sheep would not have used it if the Inspector had told them it was bad, but the Inspector highly approved of it.

604. For scab?—There was a reservation in the recommendation. It was for lice and tick.

605. *Mr. Dodson.*] Did not Mr. McRae give a certificate in favour of that dip?—I think Mr. McRae did give a testimonial.

606. *Mr. Lance.*] As a cure for scab?—Yes; but many people wanted a dip that could be used with cold water. Little's dip was used with cold water, and those who used it were desirous of seeing it a success.

607. As to the Cloudy Range country: how long have you been interested in that country?—I think Mr. Wharton had it idle for five years. Mr. Wharton has been interested in it about seven years. Cloudy Range lies between Gibson's and Highfield's. They could not stock it for fear of scab. Mr. Lowe's country was scabby, and Mr. Tinline's country was scabby in all directions. We took it in hand about two years ago. They had been mustering up carefully to make sure that all the sheep were off. We gave men £1 a head for every sheep they could get in, and they were out three months and got ten sheep. It has cost us £100 a mile for fencing. We have been dipping and mustering repeatedly all the while. We have to go on dipping because of scab on our neighbour's run, which we join. We dip with lime and sulphur. The effect is that our wool has only fetched

10d. instead of 1s. 0½d. That is a fine inflicted upon us by our neighbour having scabby sheep. We have to keep two boundary-men between us and scab, at a cost of £180 a year. We have also had to put a fence between ourselves and Highfield's. That cost £70 per mile. Having to dip our sheep before crossing the river they are depreciated in value 1s. Thus, having spoilt our wool, having to maintain boundary-keepers, and having our sheep depreciated in value, these are so many taxes put upon us by scab on our neighbour's run. We are dogged and fined after spending a lot of money, while the scabby owners are sympathized with, although they continue to go on in the same way as they have been doing for years. Mr. Dick last year promised us that, if our local Inspector advised it, he would alter the boundary and proclaim a portion of the Amuri clean.

608. But, having a scabby run, separated only by one fence, would it be possible to do so?—We said we did not insist on including Cloudy Range in the district. Leave that for some years as a buffer between the scabby run and the clean runs. We were quite willing to do that; but they would not accept that either. I asked Mr. Bayly, the Chief Inspector, if there was anything more that we could do than by putting on boundary-keepers. We said that we were quite willing to do it. He said he could not see any more that we could do. I asked him, "Will you throw the district open?" He said it would depend on the state of Gibson's sheep. He said he could not see that Gibson could do anything more than he was doing. We wrote to Mr. Bayly pointing out the difficulty.

609. Who is the Inspector of your district?—Mr. Cook is now. Mr. Foster is supervising Inspector.

610. Are you satisfied with the way Mr. Cook is carrying out the Act?—He has only just come. He was not there when I left; I understand he is on his way.

611. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] If the Act were strictly administered, do you think that would clean the district?—I think it would; a great part of the country had been cleaned. There was no reason why the cleaning should stop if the Act were strictly administered.

612. *Mr. Buchanan.*] In the Wairarapa a clean flock, separated by a simple fence from a scabby one, can travel to market?—That is what we want to do.

613. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you think there are any insuperable difficulties in the way of cleaning Gibson's country?—No; I do not think there are any insuperable difficulties in the way of cleaning it.

614. Do you know Mr. Ingles's run?—I have never been over it; I know it by looking at it.

615. It is stated that at the back there is a large quantity of bush country which is very difficult to clear sheep from: do you suppose it is more difficult than in the country you speak of?—In country of any kind you can send men to kill the sheep.

616. Then, you say there are no insuperable difficulties in cleaning these lands?—I do not think so; it is a matter of money. What I think is, rather, that Mr. Ingles is a poor man, with a small flock, which is of not much danger to the clean district. He has been fined once. Mr. Gibson has been fined twice, and both fines remitted. He is liable this month, I believe, to a much more severe fine.

617. Do you know the shearing-place where Gibson shears?—That is on the coast-side of the range. Yes.

618. How is it that he has been allowed to bring his sheep over the range to shear his sheep on that reserve?—I believe it was appointed a shearing-reserve. He rents it, I believe. It is his place now.

619. Is there any remark you would wish to make as to the amendment of the Act or its administration?—I do not think there is anything more. We want to see the Act carried out so as to see this sort of thing brought to an end. It has cost us a lot of money cleaning that country. We have to go on just the same as if we were scabby. In fact, we may become scabby as long as scab remains there.

WEDNESDAY, 17th SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. J. McARTHUR, examined.

620. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Yours is the St. James's Run?—Yes.

621. You have had experience of the working of the Sheep Act?—Yes; we had scab for a good many years, but we are clean now, and have been for between two and three years.

622. What sort of country is it where your run is situated?—It is very high country. There is a great deal of Crown land and unoccupied country about it; a great deal of it is under snow in winter-time. It comprises about ninety thousand acres.

623. Have you had great difficulty in cleaning it?—Yes; it nearly ruined us at first. We had to dip continually in the spring of the year, while the sheep were in the wool, as well as to dip in the autumn and early winter. We put up a great deal of fencing, and kept up a large staff of the best men we could get in the country. We paid them £2 per week.

624. Did you fence out the Government land?—In many cases we fenced out the Government land. We kept on mustering whenever it was possible. Of course in winter-time we could not muster. Whenever it was possible we kept men scouring the country until we got the last sheep out. By dipping in the spring of the year, before the shearing, we killed out scab. We had been going on for a considerable time under the Nelson Sheep Act. That Act was not workable. We have been fined to the extent of some £700 or £800 under that Act. Afterwards, when other neighbours joined to try and clean their sheep, by dipping in the spring before shearing, and by fencing, we were but a short time cleaning the whole country. One dipping in the spring will meet the case of any sheep that may have any breaking out. Most people dip in the autumn and do not muster and dip in the spring of the year. Scab if cleaned will break out again if sheep mix with scabby sheep. By making good musters, and by dipping in the wool before shearing, and

then by dipping again twice after sheep have been shorn, I have never known them to become again diseased, unless through mixing with infected sheep. It is true we got a low price for the wool, and we lost most of the lambs. But we were determined to get clean. That is how we cleaned the country. My country is the highest about there. There is no run adjoining to the west and north-west on the main range.

625. Yours is the highest country?—Yes.

626. Is it higher than Mr. Gibson's?—Yes; it is some thousands of feet higher.

627. Have you any bush land about?—Yes; a great deal of bush and Crown land.

628. Do you know Mr. Gibson's country?—I never saw much of Mr. Gibson's country. I have seen a part of it. I think our country is as difficult to clean as that.

629. You were put to great expense, were you not?—Yes; it cost us £800 in fines.

630. Was the payment of the fines insisted upon?—Yes; we had to pay every fine.

631. Did you ever give any bonds?—No; we never gave any bonds. Counting everything, I think it was nearly £1,000.

632. What is your opinion of the working of the Act in this district?—The new Act, I think, has been working fairly well.

633. Were there a number of owners who had sheep killed?—Yes.

634. Did they require compensation?—There were no less than five runs that had sheep killed, namely, Mr. Edgar Jones, who killed off some five thousand; Mr. Holmes killed off every sheep he had, numbering nearly five thousand; "Hopefield" killed about three thousand; "Montrose" about five thousand; and "Glynnwye" about two thousand. No one asked compensation from the Government, but in one case (Mr. Edgar Jones's) a voluntary compensation was paid by the neighbours adjoining, who subscribed the small amount necessary. They were not compelled to kill their sheep; but it was a rough country, and they wanted to clean the country before the scab had time to spread.

635. Then, I understand from you that the runholders in your neighbourhood put their backs together to try and stamp out scab?—Yes; the Inspectors have not been put to any trouble with scab in our district, as we knew our interest, and took the necessary steps.

636. Your district is not now an infected district?—The runs in it are entirely clean now. Some of them were infected last year, there being then a slight breaking-out; but at the present time every run in it is clean, although legally the district remains an "infected district."

637. What is your opinion of the Inspectors, not only of those in your own district, but those adjoining, as far as your knowledge goes?—I think they have carried out the Act very well. They may not in every case have the highest class of men. Mr. Foster is a good man, and he had really a splendid man under him till lately, namely, Mr. Scaife. In our district those who were fined got no fines remitted, but there are cases in other districts where the fines have been remitted. Some four years ago we had a few infected sheep hunted by some one across the Waiiau River on to Mr. Edgar Jones's run. The Inspector "hunted" us immediately, and it cost us £500, although it was no fault of ours, and we have never had any remission.

638. That was some years ago?—I think the Inspectors have done their duty in our district; but what I complain of is that the Act is not now strictly carried out.

639. Do you think that if it were carried out in its integrity that it would have the effect of cleaning the country?—I do. It is bound to clean the country.

640. How long would it take to clean, say, Mr Gibson's run?—I cannot say, as I do not know the country sufficiently. It might require fencing or some special means to be taken. But I have no doubt that if a good man took it in hand he could clean the country in two years at the very outside.

641. Would it require some fencing to fence off the Government land at the back?—I should think so.

642. Now, suppose a mountainous district, where fences had to be made across gullies very difficult to be fenced, in consequence of the snow breaking them down: do you think that is an obstacle to clearing a run?—Yes, it is an obstacle; but after the snow clears away you can get good men to repair fences wherever it is necessary to have them repaired.

643. That is a thing you would do, I suppose, as a matter of course?—In a country which is not at all high, flood-gates have to be constantly looked to and repaired. Where fences are put through a snow-country they are liable to be broken. There are always places where there are snow-drifts and landslips likely to break down some part of the fence; consequently it wants periodically looking to. It is quite possible in the spring to repair them and keep them in a state of repair by being constantly on the watch.

644. That is a sort of thing not exceptional in your country. You are obliged to look to fences in that way?—My experience is that in all high country there are fences going across hills and gullies for miles. They get broken down, but people repair them.

645. Is it a great expense?—Yes.

646. What amount is there on your run?—Some years the expense will be greater, some years less; if it is a good winter the damage is very light. It is impossible for me to give an estimate. It depends also on the amount of packing that will be necessary to carry the material.

647. *Captain Russell.*] You keep men permanently employed in repairing places, do you not?—Well, Yes; we have men constantly repairing fences and putting up new ones.

648. How many miles in the year?—Twenty miles last year.

649. Should you say, on the whole, that it takes one man to keep fences in order?—I think it would.

650. How much?—I think a good man would keep forty or fifty miles of fencing in order; that is, if the fence is well put up, and of good material; and unless there is quite an unusual fall of snow.

651. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do you think, from your experience, that the Nelson Act, as administered under the Provincial Government of Nelson over a similar area, was efficient for its purpose?—I do not.

652. Would you be favourable to a return to an Act of that kind, instead of the general Act now in force?—Certainly not. The Nelson Act was a great misiake. We paid more than £1,000 to the Government of Nelson for no earthly good.

653. Have you had any experience of the Marlborough Sheep Ordinance?—It is just as bad or worse than the old Nelson one.

654. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you any further remarks to make as to the present Act or the manner in which it is carried out?—I have only to say that if the Act is thoroughly carried out these runs will soon be cleaned. This is a grievance of the Amuri sheep-farmers, who have all cleaned their flocks, that they have been fined so heavily, and had to pay their fines, while fines are now remitted in the case of Gibson and others, who have had six years to do it and will not clean their sheep. People who are doing everthing possible to clean their runs, and people who have cleaned, are running a great deal of risk from these Marlborough runs. The fines being remitted there is no protection against them.

655. *Captain Russell.*] Can you tell us the actual result of scab in a merino flock: what could a man replace his flock for? I want to know what would be the value?—At present it would be about 10s., but after shearing time it could be done for 7s. 6d. per head.

656. Then, you could not replace it for less, say, in any case than 7s. or 8s?—No.

657. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you had any assistance in cleaning outside your own neighbourhood?—I do not know any one that has suffered more than we have on our run since the present Act came into force; but we never grumbled: we did our best. We never got a shilling to help us in any form. We have suffered heavy loss upon our wool, and some 1s. 6d. a head on sheep. All our sheep are now clean.

658. You refer to the dipping when crossing the Waiau River; that is, because under the Act your district is regarded as an infected district. I want your view as to that dip?—It costs 2s. a head to pass over into Canterbury; 6d. I think is charged for dipping. The sheep are reduced in value by 1s. 6d. or thereabouts. At present, as far as I know, the whole of the district on our side is clean. We are hardly content to pay this money for dipping on crossing into Canterbury. The people of our district object to it.

659. But, as long as yours is an infected district under the Act, it cannot be avoided?—No; not unless there is some discretionary power given to the Inspector by new legislation.

660. What is it causes the district to be kept an infected district?—Gibson's run.

661. You are directly interested in getting Gibson's run cleaned?—Yes.

662. If that run was clean, yours would not be an infected district under the Act?—No.

663. Here is the latest return of the Kaikoura Subdivision, which gives McRae 9,000; Ingles, 9,000; Gibson, 60,000; Parsons, 12,000; White, 480; Bullen, 23,000. You say the whole of the owners who have cleaned their sheep are endangered by one or two men?—Yes.

664. *Mr. Dodson.*] The only troubles are Messrs. Gibson and Ingles?—Yes.

665. *Mr. Lance.*] If they were clean, the district would be proclaimed "clean," and the disabilities you complain of would be removed?—Yes.

666. In the Tarnedale country they have cleaned their sheep?—Yes.

667. That is as high and difficult a country as the other?—Yes, higher, and more difficult. It is a great deal more difficult, for there they have only summer to do their work in. In winter that country is covered with snow. I should say it is ten times more difficult than the other.

668. It is much higher up?—Yes; it is the roughest country I have seen in New Zealand.

Mr. P. R. McRAE, examined.

669. *The Chairman.*] You are a runholder in Marlborough?—Yes.

670. What is the name of your run?—It comprises four runs adjoining; the run is a separate run.

671. Have you scab on your run?—I have on one run.

672. At least it is scabby under the Act at present. Has it been infected long?—Since November last.

673. Will you explain to the Committee what you know about the working of the Act in your district: is it satisfactory?—I think the Act is satisfactory. I was infected for several years. I think that was in 1867, when the Act came into force. I could see I would have to go on fencing if I were to get the runs clean. I think it took me three or four years—three years, going slowly.

674. *Mr. Dodson.*] The Act came into force in 1878?—Yes; it was in 1877 I began to fence. In January, 1879, I had all the runs fenced and the sheep cleaned.

675. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What sort of country is that?—Some of it is very rough.

676. It is high country?—Yes, very high.

677. It is a timber country?—Yes, some of it.

678. Had you much difficulty in cleaning?—Not after I got my run fenced.

679. Had you any Government reserves or unoccupied runs adjoining?—Yes; there was one reserve adjoining me—a reserve of 12,000 acres.

680. Unoccupied?—Yes; but there were sheep on it,

681. Scabby?—Yes; they were all scabby at that time.

682. What did you do to get rid of it? First of all, where did these sheep come from?—They were sheep belonging to a number of people that used to shear on that reserve; it was a shearing reserve before the Act came into force. It is called the Awatere Shearing Reserve.

683. Is it unoccupied now?—Part of it.

684. What is the other part?—Part of that has been sold. I think two lots in the block have been sold; one leased.

685. Were you put to much expense?—Yes.

686. Are there other scabby flocks in your neighbourhood?—Yes; there is the Upton Downs flock. I got infected from that flock. Mr. Busby has also a run in my neighbourhood.

687. How long has Mr. Busby been infected?—I think for the last twelve months.

688. Has he taken all necessary steps for cleaning?—I think he has; but I do not think he has been using the right material.

689. What has he been using?—Little's dip.

690. It has not been effective with him?—It does not work well with him.

691. Was that under the direction of the Inspector?—I do not think so. I think he used it because it was more convenient. He had faith in it, and I believe he has faith in it still.

692. Who is the Inspector in your district?—Mr. Blundell.

693. Are you satisfied with the way in which he performs his duties?—I think so. I have nothing to say against the Inspectors, except that I think they have been in the district too long. They ought to be moved about from time to time. I think they may be kept a little too long in one district. I think Mr. Blundell has been in the district too long.

694. Do you wish to draw the attention of the Committee to any clauses of the Act which you consider capable of amendment?—No; I have never found it unworkable. It is workable enough if a person wishes to do his duty and clean his sheep. I have had no difficulty with it whatever.

695. Of course the working of the Act depends very much on the Inspector?—Yes.

696. Are you satisfied with the way the Inspectors have acted when putting the Act in force in the district generally?—At the present time I am satisfied, but I think they have given quite sufficient time to people to clean. I think the Act ought now to be put in force. They have given the runholders ample time to eradicate scab without making the Act ruinous in any way.

697. Have you no fault to find with the Act, or the way in which it is enforced, beyond this: that, up to the present time, it has not been strictly enforced in certain cases; and you think that, ample time having been allowed, the Act ought now to be strictly enforced?—I think so; that is my opinion. The only scabby flocks belong to people who have been working against the Act instead of with it.

698. Of course the difficulty of cleaning a flock will depend to some extent on the ground: do you think there is any portion of the Marlborough District that is so difficult to clean that time should be allowed?—I do not know any part of Marlborough to which that applies. The most difficult parts of Marlborough are all clean. I have some of it myself; the Birch Hill country is most difficult.

699. If all in the district had taken the same method, and used the same efforts to clean, you think the whole district would have been clean?—I think so; it is a mere matter of fencing.

700. Do you think that it should be a question for the consideration of the Committee as to whether the owner of a run has the means to fence or not? Or I will put the question in another form: Is it an injury to sheepowners when one person neglects to carry out the directions under the Act: do you think it is an injury to the others, who are working under the Act, that some should be allowed not to clean?—I should think so, for you see in this case I got scab from my neighbour, my neighbour got it from some wild sheep. The whole country may become scabby again; worse, perhaps, than when it first started.

701. Do you know anything of sheep being driven from the Marlborough District to the Nelson District?—I was speaking to Inspector Blundell about it. I knew the run where the sheep went from.

702. Do you think there was any blame to be attached to Mr. Blundell?—I think he ought to have been more particular. There is no doubt he had been misled by the Inspector they had down in the Sound, who made some misstatement that he had been over three runs, and afterwards it was discovered that he had not been on the ground. These sheep were passed by Mr. Blundell, who sent them on to Nelson. There is a certain amount of blame attaching to the Inspector. It was rather rough on the Inspector after passing the other. Mr. Blundell was thrown off his guard.

703. Is it not necessary that sheep coming from an infected to a clean district should be dipped?—If the sheep that are going to travel hold a clean certificate for the year, and travel over a clean country, I do not see why they should.

704. But, they are dipped as a matter of fact?—That is when they come to the boundary. Marlborough is an infected district; Nelson is clean.

705. On the border, do they dip?—I think not, unless they pass through an infected district.

706. The Act requires that?—I may be wrong there. I think at one time they did not dip, but I think they are now dipped on the boundary.

707. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do you know the Kaikoura country, coming by Ingles's and Gibson's?—Yes.

708. You said just now the hill country was bad: do you consider it would be difficult to clean that country?—It is a matter of fencing.

709. You are satisfied, from your own experience, that fencing is the only thing required to enable any one to clean the most difficult country in the Marlborough Province?—Yes; but you must shut out the rugged parts of the run. Once you have a portion that is well fenced, you can kill off the wild sheep.

710. In a country like that, are fences liable to be damaged by snow?—Yes. I have fences 7,000ft. above the sea.

711. Where there are owners adjoining Crown lands, do these Crown lands constitute an exceptional difficulty?—I think not. When we had our runs fenced, we combined; we had some assistance from the Government, and we had men to destroy all the sheep outside.

712. Would you advocate the local management of the Sheep Act, instead of the central management?—No.

713. *Captain Russell.*] You say you have fenced 7,000ft. above the sea-level: can you say what is the cost per mile of keeping that in repair?—Yes. There is one man who looks after between twenty-seven and thirty miles.

714. That is in the summer?—Summer and winter.

715. Can he work in the winter?—Part of the time.

716. As a matter of fact, does it not run along the top of the range for the greater part?—No; it crosses gullies here and there.

717. But it is some of the highest country in the district? As high as Ingles's?—Yes.

718. *Mr. Harper.*] Do you know Gibson's country?—Yes.

719. There is no reason why he should not be able to clean his sheep?—It is all a matter of fencing.

720. It would not be a harder matter for him to tackle than for you?—No.

721. *Mr. Dodson.*] There is no difficulty in the fencing itself?—The watercourses are more difficult.

722. Did you fence all the watercourses?—I have flood-gates—miles of them.

723. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You began cleaning in 1878: then, you did not wait for the three years that were allowed to Marlborough?—No.

724. You found the result of putting up fences immediately?—No sooner had I done fencing than I was astonished at the result. I found my sheep to be clean in a very short time—that is with subdivisions.

725. You were able to get them clean in a short time?—Yes.

726. Have you found the results satisfactory since you threw out the outside country?—Yes; I carry more sheep inside the fences. We are doing better altogether.

727. Then, you think, quite apart from that, that fencing has been a very good investment?—There is no doubt fencing always pays. There is no doubt it is hard to find the money to put it up. It is most expensive work, but it is money well invested.

728. *Mr. Lance.*] What is about the cost per mile?—It depends on packing. If you can lay the stuff on the ground it would not cost so much. If the horses can lay down a load, say, in two days, the cost would be about £68 a mile.

729. Does that include flood-gates?—Everything.

730. Is that the outside?—£70 would be about the outside.

731. What wire do you use?—The wire I use is steel wire: it is light for packing: it is the best material.

732. Do you not find it affected by the snow?—Heat or cold has no effect upon it.

733. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Whose brand is that?—It is the same as they use in the Telegraph Department.

734. I have heard that some of this steel wire is not good?—Some of that black wire is not good. I imported this from Home.

735. What is your opinion as to materials for dipping in case of scab?—I should say that where there is scab the owner ought to be made to use lime and sulphur, for we know that is a certain cure. I would not run any risk in such a case.

736. Would you amend the Act so that the Inspector should be compelled to order a person who has scabby sheep that he must dip them in lime and sulphur?—Yes.

737. Would you insist upon it for any other things, such as ticks and lice?—For scab it is the safest and best in every way. We know it is a cure, and you can always tell when you have good lime and sulphur. If Little's dip had not been a failure with me, I should have been clean six months ago.

738. Did you use it from choice?—The scab was very slight, and I thought the stuff was all right. I dipped twice.

739. Were you ever fined for not having your sheep clean?—Yes; on one run.

740. Was the fine enforced?—It has not been enforced. They gave me three months, and if the sheep should be clean by that time it was to be remitted.

741. If you were cleaned in three months?—There were nine months expired, and I asked them to let it stop over for three months.

742. Have there been many convictions under the Act in your district?—Not many.

743. Have the fines generally been enforced?—I think they have not been enforced. I do not know any that was enforced.

THURSDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. J. WARD, examined.

744. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are living near Blenheim: do you own a run in the Kaikoura District?—Yes; it is now let to Mr. Walter Gibson, so that I have all my interest there yet.

745. Which run is it?—The Clarence or Warden and Tytler Run.

746. Have you also the Green Hills Reserve?—It is the only reserve for shearing. It is called the Clarence Reserve. There are about eighteen hundred acres of flat land. You come down the spur to dip. The highest part of the reserve over which we drive is about five thousand feet above the sea, and sixteen miles to Kaikoura.

747. It is impossible to shear elsewhere?—Quite impossible.

748. How long has the run been infected?—I took it up in 1858. It was perfectly clean for something like four years. We then caught scab. I was obliged to drive over to Kaikoura to shear for two or three years before the reserve was made.

749. How did you get there?—The first year I drove down the Conway River, across the Green Hills. I was perfectly clean then. I remained so for four years. Some men attributed my keeping clean to there being sulphur on the run. Ultimately I got scab from my neighbour's sheep. It was impossible to keep them apart. They came over in hundreds. Thus, I got scab from a neighbour in a better country. Now the neighbours come round upon me and try to tread me out altogether.

750. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Then, you have been scabby since 1862?—I took up the run in 1858. I stocked it in April, 1859.

751. Then, it is from 1863 or 1864?—Although scabby for years it was not to any great extent. I did not lose two bales of wool.

752. That is now twenty years they have been scabby?—Yes; they were all scabby. Knowing that Mr. Bullen had a better country than I had—more easily mustered, we agreed to take up the Kaikoura run, so as to act as a “buffer,” and make sure that my sheep should not scab Mr. Bullen's. They have never scabbed his flock. We put up fences, cutting off Cloudy Range. Seven years ago (six or seven) Mr. Caverhill summoned me for having strayed sheep on the Cloudy Range country. I made it a point to see those sheep brought in off the Cloudy Range. Mustering was put off for some time. The sheep were brought in. There were several hundreds of sheep. They were all very scabby. The eleven sheep I was summoned for were clean. They were straying, but it was as if they were going among small-pox. We immediately set up a fence between us and the Cloudy Range. We did the best we could. Ever since that we have a man kept there to look after the fence.

753. I do not see what all that has to do with the administration of this Act. The question is, what number of scabby sheep there are there, and whether they can be cleaned or not. So far as I can understand, Mr. Ward, there was a number of them between you and the shearing ground?—We had the whole country. I drive through no country but my own.

754. You were clean for four or five years. You have ever since been scabby. How many runs are scabby now?—I do not know.

755. How many are declared to be scabby?—I cannot say.

756. Gibson's is scabby?—Yes; but I do not think that Mr. Wood's is.

757. A short time ago, it may be about two years, all the sheep were clean with the exception of Gibson's and Ingles's?—You may say the whole range from Cloudy Range to Waipapa was infected or scabby. Mr. Wood has now cleaned all that are within fences, but there are sheep of his brand on ranges outside fence.

758. You are aware that Mr. Bullen has had his sheep clean for a great many years?—I doubt that.

759. You are aware that he has held a clean certificate for a number of years?—Not a great number.

760. Well, six or seven?—Not so many, I think; I do not know exactly—about three or four years. I am under the impression that his clean certificate is more recent.

761. Do you know that his flocks have become scabby through Gibson's?—I do not know; infected, I think.

762. Will you tell me the reason of your not having cleaned your sheep for the last twenty-two years?—The difficulties of the country.

Hon. Mr. Campbell: That is exactly the question.

763. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] That is what we want to know?—The difficulty of fencing? You must go back and consider how many years we were fencing.

764. I cannot say. You have not been doing your best. We want to know how this thing is, and the reason evidently is that you have not your country sufficiently fenced?—The answer I give is that up to a considerable time after the passing of this Act all my neighbours were scabby. They did not press me or I them. We dipped regularly. I did not lose two bales of wool all this while.

Hon. Captain Fraser: That is not the question.

765. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Then, as I understand it, as long as you and they did not interfere with each other, you agreed to go on and be scabby?—We did the best we could.

766. Well, you continued, so long as your neighbours were of the same opinion, to go on sheep-farming, so long as you merely kept scab down?—I believe the impression was that it was impossible to clean perfectly, and that, if we could keep it well under, that was all that could be done. That was my impression for years, and it was the general impression. When the present Act was passed, to think of cleaning some of the country was laughed at as ridiculous.

767. You brought in your sheep and dipped them purposely, merely to keep scab down?—We brought them in and dipped them, doing the best we could do. I did not lose two bales of wool.

768. Where do you now shear?—At the reserve.

769. Where is the reserve?—It is adjoining my runs at Clarence, sixteen miles from Kaikoura.

770. Do all the runs adjoin this reserve?—On one side, Mr. Wood's country joins; on the other side, a small portion of Mr. Bullen's; and the rest, Kaikoura Run, which is held by Mr. Bullen and myself.

771. Do other people shear in this reserve?—No, nobody. It is leased to Mr. Gibson.

772. Then, you are not interfered with at all?—The Inspector visits it.

773. Was not Flaxbourne scabby?—Yes.

774. And Richmond Brook?—Yes.

775. And several runs adjoining?—I believe so.

776. Do they now hold clean certificates?—Some do, some do not.

777. Do you not know that nearly every runholder about there now holds a clean certificate; that they were all scabby for years; and are they not now all clean?—Generally clean; Flaxbourne, and Richmond Brook, and country have no connection with my runs.

778. Can you tell me how many runs are scabby? You know your neighbours, I suppose?—I have only three clean neighbours, Mr. Wood, Mr. Bullen, and Cloudy Ranges. If the runs are the high country between my Clarence Runs and Messrs. Wood's, Collins's, Hughes's, and Waipapa, they are scabby.

779. Do you know your neighbour, Mr. Low?—He is a good way off, twenty or thirty miles.

780. Is not his high country?—It is not such country as where I am. It may be higher from the sea, but when you come to measure from the base it is not so steep; it is much more easily mustered.

781. You have been to Acheron Run?—Yes.

782. What are the hills like?—They are not so steep or difficult to muster as a great part of mine.

783. You say they are so steep that the shingle comes down?—Yes; in some places. They are hills, but mine are mountains. They are almost as nothing to some of these mountains.

784. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Were any steps taken against you?—Yes, since I have left, but not while I was there.

785. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] How many fines were paid?—None.

786. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Were you ever fined?—I never was, but Gibson was.

787. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] When did Gibson take possession?—In August, 1881.

788. Has he paid any fines?—Not that I am aware of; but he is still fencing. I am as much in for it as he is.

789. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Was not the payment conditional: the money being given back to clean his sheep with?—I understood it was this way: that, if he gave satisfaction that nothing more could be done than what he is doing, the fine was not to be inflicted.

790. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] It appears to me that what he has given is simply a promissory note: if he does not give satisfaction he will have to pay it?—I wish to enter my protest against it. The Act itself I look upon as most unjust.

791. *Hon. the Chairman.*] In what way?—On the ground that we are treated as criminals before we have done anything. You must not forget that Gibson and I were in the same boat. Those other men have a better country to clean, and they got clean. Till they got clean it was all smooth. When they got clean they were most earnest to damage others, knowing that they must eventually ruin those others. I think they are more desirous of pressing matters in order to get the country than to get rid of scab.

792. You have no right to make imputations of that sort?—There is a certain road by which Gibson can get his fencing and dipping materials. It has already cost Mr. Gibson some £200. It goes through, for a short distance, leasehold land taken up by Mr. Bullen. At the same time that Mr. Bullen is crying out for scab to be cleaned, he is doing all he can to prevent the use of this track. This fact would show that the one point of getting rid of scab is not the only one.

793. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] You complain that they broke their agreement to clean, but they cleaned their sheep in the interval?—There was no agreement.

794. You stated as a fact that it was so?—There was no agreement.

Hon. the Chairman: I think it was this way: that at the first commencement, when all the runs were scabby, there was an understanding that it was possible to get their sheep clean, and therefore they did not take such measures as would actually eradicate scab. It was a tacit understanding.

795. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] They broke faith but cleaned their sheep?—I said nothing about faith: it was hope that was broken.

796. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You say that most of the runholders have clean certificates, having cleaned their flocks, and that Mr. Ingles's and Mr. Gibson's are the only runs upon which scab is kept up?—I do not know whether the Clarence is cleaned: all that range is scabby. I wish to state that Mr. Wood's is clean within a certain fence. There is a portion of country outside where the sheep have the Swyncombe ear-mark, but Mr. Wood does not consider these belong to him. These sheep, however, have the same ear-mark; they are on land which is leased by him. This is wild mountain-top.

797. In fact, he has taken steps to fence off this wild country that he may clean his own flocks?—He has done that.

798. Suppose the same course were adopted with regard to Mr. Gibson's run, would that not give him the opportunity to get rid of scab?—Yes; it is being done as fast as it can be done; but even then we should not be certain, suppose the fencing completed. We are extremely anxious to fence this country, but it cannot be done immediately.

799. Why not?—It will take some time to get the material. There are ten miles of fencing coming from England. We are now proceeding at an expenditure of some thousand pounds. Then, there is a piece of country lying between these two places—between Wood's and my run—mountain-tops and so on. Two years ago we applied to Mr. Bayly, and he said that the Government ought to help. The Government said, "These are your sheep in that country," but Mr. Wood cuts off a certain lot. He lets his sheep go, and therefore Gibson would have to clean the whole lot.

800. Would not Mr. Wood be willing to join with others to get rid of them?—I think he would, from what I know of Mr. Wood. I know he was killing all he could. It seems to me that would be the only proper course to adopt—to fence off. Until clean he could not muster; then to join with others in killing.

801. Do you think that these sheep belonged to the runholders in the first instance?—Yes.

802. Do you think they have a claim on the Government to clear them out?—Perhaps not; but no one person should be obliged to clear them.

803. Do you not think it is your duty to join the other runholders in killing them?—Yes; but it cannot be done in a minute. While we are doing that, an attempt is being made to come down with a heavy fine, which takes the breath out of our bodies.

804. You think the Government comes down on the runholders too suddenly. Let us go back to 1878. The Act allowed three years for cleaning runs. Will you state what was done by these runholders in that time: what has Mr. Gibson done?—It took more time than that to clean the country, even the best country. We had extra musters, extra dips; we fenced in large paddocks, so that we could hold sheep. When we got them we had not the means to go on faster than we have.

Hon. Mr. Robinson: He has told us he never paid any fine, and he talks about the breath being taken out of his body.

Hon. the Chairman: He said so: that Gibson paid no fines.

805. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.]* I do not see, then, how he can talk about the breath being taken out of his body?—We have been over and over again at the Court in connection with cases. We have had all sorts of difficulties in trying to defend these cases. We had more work than we could do in extra musters, extra dipping, and fencing.

806. Was there a Mr. Clark over that country?—I believe so. I heard of his being there; I did not see him.

807. Are you aware of any report that he made about it?—I heard that he said it was a very good country.

808. Did you ever hear whether he said it could be cleaned?—Yes; with extra fencing.

809. He was sent there officially, was he not?—Yes; I believe he was sent by the Bank of New Zealand. He said it was a good country, but that it wanted more fencing. I say it can be cleaned, but not till it is fenced.

810. *Hon. the Chairman.]* Mr. Clark said it could be fenced?—Yes.

811. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.]* It can be fenced?—Parts of it.

812. It is a very short time since Mr. Clark was up there?—Some time last year.

813. Do you know whether he lived with Mr. Low?—I know that at one time he was manager for Mr. Lowe.

814. Do you know whether Mr. Low's sheep when he took charge were scabby?—I do not know.

815. Do you know whether his sheep were clean after Mr. Clark left?—I have heard they were. I do not know; it is merely hearsay about that.

Hon. Mr. Robinson: I would like to have Mr. Clark summoned. He knows the country from beginning to end. There is no one who will tell you so well of the feasibility of cleaning scab in any part of the country. Mr. Clark is the General Manager of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency.

Hon. Captain Fraser: Mr. Ward has admitted that his run could be cleaned if a certain amount of fencing were done.

816. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.]* Who is the Inspector up there?—The Head Inspector is Mr. Bayly; the other is Mr. Passau.

817. How often has Mr. Bayly visited the country?—Mr. — can tell you for certain.

818. Have you any idea how long he stayed?—I think he rode across.

819. Who is the working Inspector?—Mr. Passau was.

820. How often has he been there?—I could not say.

821. Did he give you a certificate for a large number of your sheep being clean?—No; he might Mr. Gibson. I heard they were clean.

822. Do you know whether these sheep were discovered in a short time afterwards to be all scabby?—No, I do not know.

823. I want to come to some understanding as to how often the Chief Inspector has been there, and how often the men he is supposed to look after?—I do not know.

Mr. Buchanan: Does that refer to the Clarence Run?

Hon. the Chairman: It refers to the other as well.

824. *Hon. Captain Fraser.]* I wish to ask when it was you got possession of the reserve?—It was several years after I took up the run.

825. Did you apply for it?—The country was useless without it.

826. Had any sheep been shorn in it?—No. There were two runs. Mr. Watts was the owner of the Tytler Run, which I bought afterwards. This reserve was taken up for both of us. I think Mr. Watts was the first to shear.

827. If the Government had not let you this reserve you could not have brought over scabby sheep?—I do not know that.

828. The question is, whether, if the reserve had never been let to you by the Government, you could have brought scabby sheep to the south side of the Kaikoura?—I might have bought a piece from them.

829. Did the Government give you every facility to drive scabby sheep among clean sheep?—No. I have not so driven; we all drove at one time; so did Mr. Robinson.

830. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.]* You say that Mr. Robinson drove scabby sheep. Do you know that those sheep you refer to in four weeks afterwards turned out to be perfectly clean?—We cannot all be Mr. Robinsons.

831. *Mr. Lance.]* You are carrying now about forty thousand sheep?—Yes; that is about the outside limit for winter.

832. Mr. Gibson says that forty thousand is the winter-limit?—He would know.

833. Lately they were reduced by some thousand?—We boil down some every year.

834. *Hon. the Chairman.]* Mr. Gibson said that it was at one time forty-seven thousand; that the number was never less than thirty-eight thousand; that the present number was about forty thousand?—Since this Act has been in force we never drove sheep off the country. I could have sold five thousand to Mr. Acton Adams.

835. What was the reserve made for?—For shearing purposes for this Clarence country.

Hon. Mr. Robinson: There were several reserves. We are talking about the Greenhills Reserve.

836. *Hon. Captain Fraser.]* Do you mean south of the Kaikouras; that has always been called the Clarence, but there is another reserve at the mouth of the Clarence?—Yes, so there is; but that was originally for driving purposes: it was an official reserve.

837. *Hon. the Chairman.]* Are there any other runs now that have a right to shear there?—I am not sure that any runholder has not a right, if he would insist. I think, if Sir Norman Campbell were to insist on shearing the Cloudy Range there, he could do it.

838. There are conditions in the lease, are there not, that certain runholders can shear there provided they pay £5 a thousand; the terms to be arranged?—I remember that was done at a time when it was thought the Jam Run would have to shear there.

839. Was it that the Jam and Tytler being in one person's hands, the right to shear at this reserve was given to all?—I think there would be only one person at all likely—Sir Norman Campbell, perhaps.

840. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.]* Has he the right to shear?—I think so, but am not quite sure.

841. Without charges?—He would have to pay his proportion.

842. But the reserves belong you?—It was leased to us.

843. Then, you handed it over to Mr. Gibson?—He rents it. I have let the run to him. He pays me so much a year for it.

844. *Hon. Captain Fraser.]* You say that some of your neighbours were pressing hard upon you with an ulterior object?—I think so.

845. Are you aware that these neighbours have gone to great expense in reducing their flocks, in fencing, and that they are afraid that all that expense will be thrown away and their flocks will become scabby again?—But I have done the same. I have also taken the medicine. I am trying to do my best, and to fence my proportion; but they have a better country. I wish to state what took place at a meeting respecting the Cloudy Range. It has been stated that it was not stocked through fear of being scabbed from Gibson's run. I know that that is not quite correct. It was not entirely from fear of Gibson that it was not stocked, but to make sure it was clear of their own scabby sheep, as it was stocked some years ago, and also to fence. The fence between Gibson's and Cloudy Range cost us £68 a mile for the mere erection, independent of cost of material and carriage. We have also kept a man to look after the fence since. It was not stocked with a view of having it thoroughly clean before putting sheep on it. I think, about two years ago, when some sheep strayed, over twenty-three were found there. They were scabby. Among the lot were three of mine, but they were clean.

846. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.]* Who was in occupation?—Sir Norman Campbell, I think.

847. *Hon. the Chairman.]* You were speaking of not stocking the Cloudy Range through fear of the Cloudy Range sheep mixing with yours?—It had not been stocked for years. It was not stocked with the view of getting it thoroughly clean. It was kept clear from their own sheep. It had been stocked years ago by Mr. Caverhill, before he sold Highfield Run to present owners.

848. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.]* The Highfield Run is clean now?—I believe so.

849. They have been clean for several years?—About two years, I think.

850. *Mr. Lance.]* How could your sheep mixing with scabby sheep be found clean?—They might go there clean and not catch scab.

851. *Mr. Buchanan.]* Do you know the country occupied by Mr. McArthur?—I never was on it, but I know it is very high country.

852. Do you know the Tarndale country?—I know that it is in a very high position.

853. Do you know the country occupied by Mr. McRae?—Yes, I know it.

854. Do I understand you to assert that your country is more difficult to clean than those?—Yes.

855. Does that account for your taking the medicine, and your country not being clean?—Not entirely. McRae has some country quite as difficult as mine, perhaps, but he has not the extent of difficult country as I have.

856. Are you in a position to state to the Committee that your country is more difficult to clean than Tarndale and those other two properties?—Their country may be higher from the sea, but it is nothing like the Kaikoura Ranges.

857. Do you feel justified in contradicting the assertion of a gentleman well qualified to judge, who has been over those properties, and who says that they are more difficult to clean than even yours?—I would like to see what his evidence is worth: it could not contradict mine.

Sir NORMAN CAMPBELL, re-examined.

858. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.]* There appears to be some wrong impression; that is, some difference of opinion exists as to the evidence you gave when last before the Committee. I should like to know what is your opinion as to the administration of this Scab Act altogether; whether you think it is efficiently carried out?—It is not being administered at all, it has been suspended.

859. How often has Mr. Bayly been to that district?—Do you mean since he took charge of the district—I really cannot say.

860. Have there been any Inspectors there?—Yes.

861. Perhaps you can tell me if this is true: that a certificate was granted for thirty thousand sheep as being clean, and that immediately afterwards they were discovered to be scabby?—There was not a certificate granted, but Mr. Passau wrote to Mr. Bayly, telling him he had carefully inspected those sheep and there was not the slightest sign of scab in them.

862. Where was that?—In Kaikoura.

863. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.]* You do not mention the run?—Mr. Passau said that he had carefully inspected them, and that they were clean. When they came in he said they were scabbier than he had known them to be for some years.

864. *Hon. the Chairman.*] How soon after writing to Mr. Bayly?—I think you have the letter there.

865. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do you know how many scabby flocks there are now in Kaikoura, and to whom they belong?—To Gibson, Ingles, and Reese. There are several “cockatoos” there with scabby flocks, but I do not know how many.

866. Do you know how long these sheep have been scabby?—I believe they have never been clean.

867. Was there ever a portion of the Highfield country, between Highfield proper and Mr. Ward’s country, kept free from sheep, so as to be a buffer?—They kept it as free as they could.

868. It was not stocked?—Not by Highfield.

869. How long was it kept without sheep?—For five years, to the best of my knowledge.

870. Was that to make the Highfield sheep secure?—They were afraid that, if they stocked it, the infection would get into Highfield, and extend into the whole Amuri. It was kept to be a buffer. It was mustered year by year. Before putting our sheep on the Cloudy Range, we gave two men £1 per head for any sheep they could get; they only got ten.

871. Do you know that any of those who were fined paid the fines?—Yes; Mr. Ingles paid a fine; Mr. Timine, I think, paid his fine.

872. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Did he pay any money for his Lyndon flock being scabby?—I do not think he ever paid it. He paid one small fine of 40s. for not giving notice of washing. He was fined £450, but he appealed to the Supreme Court. That fine was not paid, to my knowledge.

873. *Hon. the Chairman.*] It has been stated here in evidence that there was a muster of the Cloudy Range, and that, out of twenty-seven sheep that were got, three belonged to Mr. Gibson, and were clean, while the others belonged to Highfield, and were scabby?—To the best of my belief, we did not get any Highfield sheep at all. I think it was thirty-three; I do not think it was twenty-seven.

874. It has been stated that the reason why this portion of the Cloudy Range was unoccupied was in order to keep the Highfield sheep within the fences, that they could be thoroughly cleaned: do you confirm that statement?—The Highfield sheep were scabby in Mr. Caverhill’s time. For the purpose of cleaning they took sheep off that part of the run.

875. Was that the reason the Cloudy Range was unoccupied, and not from fear of Gibson?—No; they have been endeavouring to get their sheep off to keep it for a buffer. You will see a letter there. We wrote a letter, telling the exact circumstances.

876. *Mr. Lance.*] It has been stated that the owners of Highfield Run did not use that country on account of their fear of scab, but for the purpose of cleaning: is that true?—I do not think it is true: they simply were afraid to stock. Mr. Corbett, the Highfield manager, refused to stock, because he said the risk was too great. They kept the run separate from Highfield proper. Our grievance is that we have to spend a lot of money in fencing, &c.; that we cannot get our sheep into Canterbury without extra cost; that we have to maintain a lot of boundary-keepers; that we have to pay a lot of money, being heavily fined; and that our wool is depreciated in value: all because of these men being allowed to keep scab in the district.

Mr. R. S. HAWKINS, examined.

877. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You desire to give evidence on the subject of rabbits?—If the Committee wish for evidence on that subject.

878. But I should first ask whether you have any experience of the working of the Sheep Act?—I had the misfortune to be scabby once.

879. Is it as to the administration of the Act you would give evidence?—I hardly know yet as to what I am expected to give evidence on.

880. Is your land not scabby?—Not now.

881. Nor Boland’s?—It is clean now.

882. Was it clean when you took possession?—Yes.

883. Are any of your neighbours’ scabby?—I am not sure; one was scabby, but he has now a clean certificate. My run was scabbed from part of his land, which was open to Government bush.

884. What evidence have you to give as to the working of the Act?—That is a burning question. It is a very hard thing for me to say anything on that subject. I have studiously kept aloof from all questions concerning the administration of the Sheep Act of late. I took part in it at one time. There was a motion made by myself, at a public meeting which was held at Masterton, where the question of the Sheep Act was brought up. I moved that a committee be appointed, with a view to obtain amendments of the Act, and more effective administration.

885. Were you dissatisfied with the working of the Act?—We certainly were then.

886. In what respect?—We were satisfied that scab was being kept alive in the district, and we saw no probability of its being got rid of under the then administration of the Act. We felt that more energetic measures were necessary on the part of the sheep authorities.

887. Did the Inspectors take proper steps to compel the owners of scabby sheep to clean them?—That is a very difficult question to answer. My feeling on the subject was that we should not go into all the petty questions and accusations brought by one and another against the Inspectors. I went on the broad ground that the Whareama was not clean, and ought to be clean. That indicated to me that a change was necessary; that greater power and force ought to be brought to bear in the Whareama, so that the work might be done. The course I urged on the committee was this: I asked them not to go into accusations against the Inspectors, but simply that they should ask the Government to appoint a thoroughly-qualified person, who should have sole and absolute charge of that district, and that he should have power to engage what, in his judgment, was a sufficient number of men; with a view to clean the Government lands of scab; that he should be well paid, and we agreed in committee to suggest that he should have a bonus if he cleaned the district at the end of the year, and kept it clean, I think, for eighteen months. These were the resolutions which we came to unanimously. It was in consequence of that that certain action was taken, and

we agreed that the person whom the committee had most confidence in was Mr. John Drummond. He was a man of large experience in sheep and scab, and of sterling character—a man who would not be influenced by one or another, who would do his duty, and do it well. The Government did not give us all we asked, but they appointed Mr. Drummond. They went a step beyond that, and dealt with the then Inspector, which we did not ask.

888. In what way?—Practically he had to resign; that is, he was to be removed. He declined that, and lost his appointment.

889. Was it in consequence of the Act not being carried out sufficiently stringently, or because the Act was not being put in force, that you were dissatisfied?—Because no substantial progress was made in the eradication of scab. I was anxious not to bring any sort of charge against the Inspector.

890. I asked you whether, as a general result, the Act was not put in force so as to be satisfactory?—It certainly was not put in force in a manner that was satisfactory, because the scab was not got rid of as it could have been got rid of. My opinion at the time was that the Inspector was asked to do more than he could do. He had got charge of an extensive scabby district. He had charge not only of that district but other districts. He had also office work to attend to, and the administration of the Rabbit Act. We wanted a man with plenary powers—a man who should be free from all this rabbit work and central office work. It was a district which required one qualified man to go into it and work the Act. We concluded that the Government agreed with that, because they appointed Mr. Drummond.

891. If I understand rightly, the fault you find is in the fact of there not being sufficient power in the Head Inspector in your district—that is, that he had not sufficient assistance—and not with anything in the Act itself?—We undoubtedly were agreed with regard to the amendments to the Act itself. We put our wants into the form of resolutions. Had I known I was to be examined with reference to the Sheep Act I would have brought those resolutions with me.

892. We have received a copy of amendments suggested by a number of sheepowners at the meeting: are not these they?—Some of them.

893. Mr. Walker has explained them to us?—Some of those contain resolutions passed at our previous meeting.

894. Do you recognize them as copies?—Some of them; not all. Two of them were undoubtedly agreed to by us. Simultaneous dipping was one thing and the provision of dipping apparatus another, and the making the giving a certificate compulsory if the sheep were found to be clean. I regard those amendments as necessary. The other resolutions on this paper are chiefly relaxations of the Act, on which I express no opinion. Generally, I believe the value of the Act depends on the resolution and determination of the Inspectors, the support given to the Inspectors by the department, and the firm administration of the Act in the Resident Magistrate's Court.

895. Can you tell us of any instance of a person being summoned in whose case the Act was found to have failed?—No; I am not prepared to give cases; but I think there are two or three things in which difficulties present themselves. The Inspector does not, or did not, get the aid of a solicitor in all cases. It appears to me that he ought always to have professional assistance at his command. A layman is at a great disadvantage without skilled advice. If I were a public officer, having to conduct prosecutions, I think it would be unjust to deprive me of professional assistance: it is very damaging to the authorities to deny that assistance. An Inspector ought never to take a case into Court unless he is certain to succeed. He wants professional advice, in the first instance, before he takes proceedings. The Government should secure that for their officers. Certain Inspectors under the Rabbit Act went into Court without knowing the law. They were defeated on a technical point. They were blamed for taking the case into Court; but the blame was with the department for not seeing that they were properly advised. The public does not see the ins and outs of the tripping-up, and concludes that the Act may be defied. In the Resident Magistrate's Court, under the Rabbit and Sheep Acts, there was a certain amount of leniency shown. There is not a sufficient recognition of the fact that a man who allows scab to continue in his sheep, and neglects to eradicate, not only robs himself, but does an enormous deal of injury to his neighbour and the whole district. The fine that may be inflicted on him is as nothing compared with the injury done to the neighbour and the district. It has appeared to me that there was, if not is, a real want of professional aid to the Inspectors and a want of firmness on the part of the Resident Magistrate. There is a combination required of these two things. The administration of the law under these Acts would have been more satisfactory had this been done. The administration of the Act is everything. I feel that the Rabbit Act and the Sheep Act are strong enough if the man who administers them is thoroughly supported.

896. You are in favour of having the Act carried out strictly?—I am. I believe in it. The best Act is useless if you do not carry it out firmly.

897. Do you think the department has not backed up its subordinates?—I do not say that; but there has been a certain amount of slackness here and there. There are wanting vigour and determination. I heard the late Inspector say that he had applied for sufficient aid to enable him to clean the Crown lands, and that his application was neglected.

898. We have before us correspondence relating to this. It appears that there was some authority given to two persons. There were some two hundred sheep that were paid for. You do not think that was sufficient?—Two persons could not do the whole of the work. It is a very large tract of country to clean. They must go over the whole place and root things out. There are one of two courses for the Government to take—either to clean these lands, or to get rid of the responsibility by putting the lands into the market. Every one appears to be agreed that scab has been kept alive largely by sheep in these Government lands. I have Government lands adjoining me out of which Government lands, in connection with an open gully on private lands, I was scabbed. I can only trace it to that.

899. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] I should like a straightforward answer from you as to whether you

think the Inspector's subordinates and the Inspector have been well supported by the chief office?—As to the subordinate Inspector in our district I have no reason to say that he is not now supported.

900. Because you are not scabbed now, but when you were scabbed you were then under that impression?—Yes; I had that impression even later, for my run was cleaned in 1882.

901. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you the impression that, if proper steps were taken, and the Act were put strictly in force, with the determination to eradicate scab, the country would be cleaned?—Most certainly; I am most clear on that subject.

902. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Have the informations been regularly laid by the Inspector against those who have infected sheep?—I cannot say whether the informations have been regularly laid.

903. According to the Act it is incumbent to lay information every six months, that is, a fresh information every six months?—I cannot say whether that has been done. I cannot answer that question.

904. *Mr. Lance.*] I should like to know whether this bush country you speak of as a large tract of country is the same as that land in respect to which Mr. Beetham gave evidence?—I have no doubt it is; but there are several different blocks of unoccupied land in that district.

905. Mr. Beetham told us that a person named Leverton was paid 5s. a head to kill sheep: do you think that that is sufficient?—That is a question which I would leave in the hands of the Inspector. If there were a large number of sheep it might be sufficient; if there were only some few it would not.

906. What do you think would be sufficient to get the last sheep?—The course the committee was asked to take was to request the Government to give Mr. Drummond as many men as he required to clear the whole of the district of wild sheep. I remember that Mr. William Beetham was to be one of the deputation. My observation to him was, "Let the Government understand what we mean: we mean that the district should be cleaned, and it is the duty of the Government to do it; that if it would take forty men to do it they must have the forty men. The injury done to the district and the colony is inestimably greater than the wages of forty men."

907. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Are you aware that dissatisfaction was expressed at Te Nui?—I am sorry to say that I did not read the whole report of the meeting. I skimmed through it. I did see there was some question raised as to maladministration, and one person wished to insert another word. I should have voted against the use of the word "maladministration." I do not know there is maladministration. My opinion is that Mr. Drummond is doing his work as well, as faithfully and justly, as any man could do it.

908. Are you of opinion that there is such a decrease of scab in the district as is indicated by the latest *Gazette* returns?—I am hardly a judge, but I think that one of the greatest nests of scab has been routed out by Messrs. Williams and Beetham, besides the active steps taken by the Inspector; and, as this was done several months ago, we may hope that the danger arising from the straying of sheep from thence has come to an end. That alone would diminish the risks of scab.

909. Would the settlers themselves assist in carrying out the Act?—It must be understood that a good deal would lie with the settlers themselves. I am not one of those who would lay all the blame in this matter on the Government. I think there is quite as much blame on the part of the settlers themselves.

Mr. J. HURSE, examined,

910. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What district do you come from, Mr. Hurse?—I come from Canterbury: I have been buying sheep for some years on the other side of the Waiau. They have to be dipped twice there from clean runs—from runs that have been clean from two to ten years—before entering Canterbury Sheep District.

911. Why?—Because the district north of the Waiau is proclaimed infected. Sheep have to come to the Waiau River, receive one dip there, then be quarantined for a week, and after receiving another dip they can go on. Of course they have very little or no feed. This reduces the value of the sheep at least 2s. a head. It matters not whether a clean certificate has been held for a month or for four or five years, the owners of the sheep are in exactly the same position with regard to dipping. Neither does it matter whether the sheep come from fifty or sixty miles beyond the dipping place. If they come there clean they have to be twice dipped, although previously passing through a clean country and going on to another country that is clean.

912. Do you think that a great disadvantage?—Yes; because there is no inducement to be clean: if a man holds a clean certificate for one year he is in the same position as the man who holds a clean certificate for five or ten years, and the man who holds a clean certificate for five or ten years is in the same position as one who holds one only for three months.

913. What is the cause of that?—The cause is that there are one or two runs scabby in their district; yet there are several stations which have held clean certificates for five or six years.

914. This comes of a district being called under the Act an infected district. It is declared to be so infected because one or two out of a great number of runs have lately been infected, although now all the runs are clean?—Yes; the runs are all clean. I may say that I would as soon as not take sheep without being dipped from runs that have held clean certificates for several years. I have brought the matter under the notice of the Inspector, saying that one dip on the station was quite sufficient. They should cross the river and not be quarantined or dipped.

915. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You would suggest that alteration?—Yes; the Inspector, under whose notice I brought the matter, said that he had no discretionary power.

916. Do you not think it would be better to dip at the quarantine-ground?—No. They leave their station with a clean certificate; they travel through a clean country before getting dipped at the quarantine-ground; then why not dip on the station? I see no risk. There is just as much risk at the quarantine-ground.

917. Have you any suggestion to make with regard to boundaries?—You must make your boundary. It would not be difficult at the Waiau. The Waiau is itself a definite boundary. What is complained of is, that an owner who may have held a clean certificate for years is placed in the same position as the man who holds a certificate only since yesterday.

918. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do you mean to tell me that in taking a lot of sheep—supposing a few scabby ones had been among them—you would be able to say that the scabby ones were taken out; or, if the scabby sheep were taken away, upon seeing the remainder, could you say they were clean?—If they had one dip on the station that would remedy the evil. If the sheep were infected in that way there must have been an adjacent run that was scabby.

919. Do you mean to tell me that you can take sheep out of a scabby district with the perfect certainty that they are clean?—It has been done repeatedly on the south side of the Waiau.

920. Were they not dressed?—No; and they were taken from stations adjoining a scabby run.

921. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You state that in some cases clean sheep were taken from the north side of the Waiau, and, although two or three clean flocks stood between them and any infected country, they had to go through the same ordeal—twice dipping and a week's quarantine—the second dip as if they had come from a flock adjoining that that was scabby?—Yes; whether they held a certificate for three months or ten years.

922. You have stated your opinion as to clean sheep travelling through a clean country; what is your opinion about this: taking sheep from a flock adjoining scab; how would it be possible to give them one dipping on the station?—That is what I suggest. The Inspector should see the sheep dipped once on the station, and after an interval of fourteen days he should see the second dipping also on the station, and then allow the sheep to travel right away. In the case again of a flock one remove from a scabby flock—a flock, that is, holding a clean certificate intervening—on my suggestion they should be dipped only once on the station; but the Inspector at present has no discretionary power. A man therefore adjoining a scabby flock and holding a three months' certificate is placed in the same position as a man who holds a clean certificate for years, and does not adjoin scab.

923. *Mr. Dodson.*] Do you think it desirable to give the Inspector a discretionary power?—If you have a practical man like the man we have in our country, Yes; but in many cases Inspectors are not practical men.

924. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you any remarks to make about Inspectors?—Nothing, except that I have known Mr. Foster for a long time. I think he is a thoroughly practical man. I do not think he can be surpassed. I know there are some Inspectors that are not up to the mark. I know that for many years Mr. Foster has been associated with the administration of the Scab Act, and that he is a thoroughly practical man.

FRIDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. FOSTER, examined.

925. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are Inspector of the North Canterbury District?—Yes; I am also Inspector of the Amuri and Kaikoura Subdivisions, Marlborough District.

926. I was going to ask you first as to the Canterbury portion of the district: how long have you been there?—Between eight and nine years.

927. Was there scab in any portion of this district?—Yes.

928. In what portion?—At Glenmark, Mr. Moore's property.

929. Is that clean now?—Yes; it has been clean for seven years.

930. Was there difficulty in cleaning that?—None whatever.

931. I was referring more particularly to the northern portion of this Canterbury District, the Amuri part of it: was that scabby when you took it?—Yes.

932. Is that clean now?—Yes.

933. Was that part of the Amuri south of the Waiau infected?—At the time that I took charge there was scab in the greater portion of the country at the head of the Waiau—some of the roughest country in New Zealand.

934. You say that is clean now?—Yes.

935. Was there difficulty in cleaning that?—There was a great deal of difficulty: we had to slaughter a great many thousands of sheep before we could do it.

936. Were the owners of these runs put to great expense in cleaning them?—Yes; they were.

937. Was the Act of 1878 strictly enforced?—It was strictly enforced in every instance.

938. In enforcing the Act, was there occasion for convictions and fines?—Not in that portion.

939. The owners willingly obeyed the Act according to instructions?—Yes; they put up a great deal of fencing and killed off a great many sheep; but the cleaning was done at very great expense.

940. Does the same apply to the other districts, to Cheviot and Ashley?—We had no scab in Cheviot, and the Ashley District has been cleaned for many years.

941. You also have the superintendence of the Kaikoura and Amuri Subdivisions of the Marlborough Sheep District?—Yes.

942. You know them well?—Yes.

943. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Does Cheviot include Parnassus and Highfield?—Yes; your run is in Cheviot.

944. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You know, then, this country, the Amuri north of the Waiau and the Kaikouras?—Yes; nearly the whole of it I know very intimately.

945. That is an infected district?—Yes.

946. Are there many flocks in it that are clean?—Yes; a considerable number. In fact, at this moment, the whole Amuri Subdivision is clean.

947. In regard to the Kaikoura?—There are only three actually scabby runs there.

948. Well, now, going back a few years: were these flocks clean at that time? Was the Amuri all clean?—Some of the Amuri flocks were. The Hawkeswood, Parnassus, and Leslie Hills Runs have been clean for some seven or eight years; Highfield rather less, about four years.

949. You say the whole of the Amuri north of the Waiau is now clean: how many infected runs are there in the Kaikouras?—There are three actually scabby, and there are two or three others on the infected list, from the fact of infected sheep adjoining them. They are small flocks.

950. Have those flocks in the Amuri portion of this district been cleaned since you have been in the district?—Several of them.

951. Was there difficulty in cleaning them?—Yes; great difficulty.

952. What sort of country is that?—Very high mountainous country, with a good deal of bush on portions of it.

953. Country difficult to fence?—Yes; very difficult.

954. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] What district are you speaking of?—The country which has actually been cleaned—Mr. Low's country and that end.

955. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I simply wanted to know whether, in cleaning these flocks, the owners have been put to large expense?—Yes; they have in every instance at that end—in fact, all over the district they have.

956. They have had to kill sheep and fence?—Yes; one of the first things they had to do was to kill portions of their flocks and erect fencing.

957. At great expense?—Yes.

957A. In regard to the Kaikoura District there have been several flocks clean, I think?—Yes.

958. Since the Act came into force in 1878?—Yes; since this Act came into force Mr. Bullen's and the Swyncombe Run and Mr. Robert Tinline's have been cleaned.

959. Was that at great cost to the owners?—At very great cost indeed, in fencing and destruction of sheep.

960. In regard to those runs that remain scabby at this time: can you give the reason for their being scabby?—No, I cannot; they ought to have been cleaned years ago.

961. Do you know any reason why they should be still scabby whilst these others are clean? Are they in such a position as to make it more difficult to clean them?—There may be a little more difficulty with them than with some runs in the Amuri, such as Mr. Low's and Mr. Macarthur's.

962. Have proper steps been taken, in your opinion, for cleaning these runs?—No; I cannot say that there have—not in every instance, at any rate.

963. Is the department taking steps to compel them to clean the runs?—Yes; we have brought the Act into force. They have been fined on several occasions, at least convictions have been obtained in Court, but the fines I believe have been remitted.

964. Have the fines been remitted in every case?—Not in every case. The first informations that were laid under the 23rd section were against Messrs. Ingles and Gordon Gibson. These were for not taking proper precautions to clean their sheep.

965. That is under the 23rd section?—Yes; that was last May twelve months.

966. Were fines inflicted in these cases?—The fines were remitted, I believe.

967. They were convicted, but the fines were remitted?—Yes. I was not in charge of that district at the time.

968. Since you have had charge of the district, have there been many convictions?—The first was against Mr. Ingles and the owner of the Waipapa sheep. Mr. Gordon Gibson was not the owner at that time; Mr. Tinline paid the fine. Mr. John Tinline came into possession of the sheep as mortgagee. Those were the only two cases at that time—the 10th December. In those cases we had to put a bailiff in possession of a portion of Mr. Ingles's sheep to recover the amount of the fine, and he applied to the Supreme Court in Wellington for an injunction to stop proceedings. The Chief Justice, I believe it was, granted the injunction on the condition that the fine was paid into Court, which was done. Afterwards an appeal case was heard last April, when Mr. Ingles lost it, and the fine was paid.

969. I do not quite understand. Mr. Ingles was fined by the Resident Magistrate and appealed to the Supreme Court?—Yes. He refused, in the first instance, to pay the fine. We put the bailiff in to seize a certain number of sheep. Then he applied for an injunction to stop our proceedings, which was granted on condition that the fine was paid into Court, which was done.

970. Then, of course, you gave up possession of the sheep?—We gave up possession of the sheep.

971. After that he appealed?—Yes: he obtained an injunction. I suppose it was an interim injunction, pending the result of the appeal.

972. It seems a long time afterwards. Notice was given at the time?—Yes, or immediately afterwards.

973. Of course that occurred in Wellington?—I do not know anything, of that of my own knowledge.

974. With regard to the Kincaid Run, will you state what sort of country it consists of?—It is a double limestone range, in the midst of very dense bush. It is surrounded by many miles of bush: this bush is full of wild sheep. Mr. Ingles has done no fencing, and taken no steps whatever to clear that portion of his run.

975. Do you consider it more difficult than other parts to clean?—It is very difficult to clean, but it is simply a matter of fencing and reducing the stock, the same as any one else would have to do.

976. It could be done?—No doubt it could.

977. Probably at no greater expense than other portions of the country?—No; I should not think the expense would be greater: it is quite easy to fence.

978. Is there no difficulty on account of the great gullies?—I have heard that there are some rough gullies at the extreme end of the run, but I have never been so far. Mr. Reese, owner of the

Waipapa Run, is fencing within a mile or two across the same gullies. There are no gullies there that could not be fenced across.

979. Have you ever made a report to Mr. Ingles himself that you considered that portion of the run could not be cleaned?—No; certainly not.

980. Or that there was any too difficult to fence in?—Shortly before I took charge of the country Mr. Bayly sent two Inspectors to see if the country could not be fenced, and to report upon it. Mr. Ingles objected very much to their reports, and when I came in charge he asked me to see for myself and say what I would suggest. I went with Mr. Ingles, and drew up a scheme which he appeared to agree to at the time, and I reported to him accordingly. I have my letter-book here, with a copy of my report in it, if you wish to see it.

981. Will you give us the substance of it?—I have only written one letter to Mr. Ingles on the subject.

982. From the portion I read of Mr. Ingles's letter, it seemed that the report went to show that the land was such that it would be very difficult or impossible to make a good fence?—No. I objected to the scheme that the other Inspectors had drawn up, which was simply to fence in this Island, as it were, with fifteen miles of fencing, leaving thousands of acres of open and bush country full of scabby sheep. I said it would be almost impossible for Mr. Ingles to keep this small flock inside the fifteen miles of fencing clean unless he cleaned the whole bush at the same time. In my opinion, the first step to be taken was to fence in some large mustering-paddocks. At the time I am speaking of—in fact now—there is no fencing whatever on this portion of the country. I suggested, in the first place, that he should fence in some large mustering-paddocks, which would hold a considerable portion of his flock during the winter. This would have enabled him to start this season with quite two-thirds of his flock clean. I will read a portion of my report. I need not quote the whole of it. It is dated 27th October last: "Having seen sufficient of your country north of the Hapuka to enable me to determine what steps should, in my opinion, be taken by you in order to clean the country effectually, I wish to lay before you the conclusions I have arrived at, for your consideration, in the hope that, should you agree to adopt my suggestions, no time will be lost in the fencing, &c., being put in hand. In the first place, I may say that I do not think that it would be at all desirable to fence in the Buibui country alone, leaving out such a large extent of both open and bush country, which is more or less infested with wild sheep. I think it is extremely doubtful whether such an extent of fence—some fifteen miles—through such country, and with two flood-gates at the extreme end, would be maintained in sheep-proof condition through the winter. I think also that having this block fenced would probably have the effect of lulling you into a false sense of security, and that you would not, in consequence, follow up the killing-off the bush-sheep with the energy and persistency which the case undoubtedly demands. The result would be that each spring a fresh outbreak would almost inevitably occur. Having in view the large extent of bush with which your country is surrounded, I look upon it as absolutely necessary that the bush-country should be cleaned at the same time as the open, and I believe this can only be done by providing securely-fenced paddocks. On another ground also I disagree with the idea of your fencing in the Buibui country alone and cleaning the sheep within your fences. The Sheep Act provides that no certificate shall be granted until the whole of the sheep are cleaned. I therefore could not sanction the granting of a clean certificate until your bush-country included within the boundaries of your run is also free from disease. In my opinion this end can only be attained by fencing in a large mustering-paddock, a holding-paddock for rough sheep, &c., and probably some other fencing which would facilitate the working of and mustering the sheep." Then I go into the question of the cost of fencing, and I finish up: "With this amount of fencing, and with continuous mustering through the autumn with a really efficient gang of musterers, I am confident that the Buibui Run and surrounding bush could be so nearly cleaned this season that absolute certainty could be made of the whole block next year." That was my opinion at the time, and it is still, but nothing has been done, and twelve months have been lost.

983. What is the cost of that fencing?—That fencing would be under £600.

984. How much country would that enclose?—I do not know what would be the area enclosed, but I estimated it to carry two thousand sheep.

985. Does Mr. Ingles hold a clean certificate for any portion of his flock now?—Yes; that is another portion of my plan. Mr. Ingles, for the last twenty years, has been bringing these scabby sheep to what is called the Kincaid Flat, in front of Kaikoura, and shearing them. Then in autumn, when all the shearing is done, the paddock-sheep were dipped and practically cleaned until the next year. Not only that, but, by this system of bringing down scabby sheep, there is continually the risk of spreading scab on small farms in the vicinity of Kaikoura.

986. So you think that, by keeping these sheep down in the paddocks, there would be no risk of their giving scab to the sheep adjoining at the back?—Yes; I proposed it not only for their own benefit, but also to prevent the spread of scab in addition. I have given a clean certificate to the Kincaid portion, on condition of a wool-shed and dip being constructed on the banks of the Hapuka, where there are no other flocks.

987. Does the Act authorize your giving a certificate on that account?—I should say certainly, if the run is divided in that way. It is under a different name: Kincaid Farm, under Mr. A. W. Ingles, and the Buibui Run, under Mr. H. Ingles. The sheep, when they are shorn, will be under separate brands.

988. But they are not now under separate brands?—No; we left that till the shearing. They are now under the same brand, but, of course, they are some eight or nine miles apart. The flocks do not adjoin at all.

989. But they run up to the same fence?—There are some eight or nine miles of rough bush between the flat and them, with no sheep running between. They are practically eight miles apart.

990. But there is no fence to prevent them from coming up?—Yes; there is the Kincaid fence.

991. There is only one fence to separate them?—Only one fence to separate them.

992. There is nothing to prevent the sheep, if they force their way through the bush, from getting up to that fence?—No; only they would have to go through these miles of very rough bush.

993. How do you know that portion of the runs have changed hands?—Partly by letters from the Messrs. Ingles to the effect that they would do this, and also from their sheep returns: they sent in separate sheep returns. We have given them notice to register a fresh brand for the Kincaid Farm.

994. In fact, you treat them now as two separate runs entirely?—Two separate runs entirely.

995. Is there a distinct shearing-shed?—Mr. Ingles promised to build a distinct shed for the Buibui flock.

996. There was none at the time?—Yes, a shed at Kincaid; but there is no new wool-shed erected yet. Mr. Ingles told me he was trying to buy property suitable—a saw-mill—but whether he has done so or not I do not know.

997. I think you said that no steps had been taken to clean the bush at the back?—None whatever.

998. There are none going on at the present time?—None. I sent an Inspector up about three weeks ago, and there was no work going on then.

999. Is the department taking steps to enforce the Act?—Yes.

1000. This portion of the run has been scabby for some time?—Yes; for the last twenty-two years.

1001. And informations are laid every six months?—Informations are laid every six months. I, unfortunately, lost the last case by neglecting to prove the previous conviction in Court. The case was dismissed; that was a month ago. I am laying a fresh information now.

1002. Do you consider that it would be very expensive to clean that bush?—No; I do not think it would be very expensive. Of course, as I say, it would necessitate a great deal of fencing, and there would have to be a great many sheep killed off, I think.

1003. Do you consider that that country is as difficult to clean as Tarndale, for instance?—It is more difficult, on account of the bush; Tarndale is chiefly open country.

1004. With regard to Mr. Gibson's run on the Clarence: that has been scabby for a long time?—Yes; I believe for the same time that Mr. Ingles's run has—for many years, at any rate.

1005. Do you know of any reason to prevent it being cleaned?—None whatever. If proper steps had been taken when this Act came into force on the 1st January, 1879, the run ought to have been easily cleaned within two years after that.

1006. Were proper steps taken at that time?—From what I have seen of the run, I should think that no steps—or very few steps—were taken.

1007. What steps would be necessary to clean that run now?—I should think the owner ought to erect another sixteen or twenty miles of fencing—which is being done now—and reduce the stock by one-fourth.

1008. Supposing that plan to be carried out, how long would it take to clean the run?—I would undertake to clean it this season.

1009. Before the winter?—Yes; before next winter.

1010. You are aware that there is a large quantity of unoccupied land at the top of the hills?—Yes.

1011. There are scabby sheep there?—Yes, I believe so; but I do not know it of my own knowledge.

1012. I want to know, when you make that statement as to the possibility of cleaning the run, if you are aware of the unoccupied country with the scabby sheep on it?—A large portion of that country would be fenced off.

1013. You say proceedings have been taken against Mr. Gibson?—Yes. I should like to explain, with regard to the Crown lands, that those sheep could not live on the Crown lands during the winter. It is only the highest tops that are Crown lands. During the summer, of course, they go backward and forward, and, as the snow goes off, they follow up the range. I should say all these sheep during the winter must be on Mr. Gibson's country, or in the bush on Mr. Ingles's side.

1014. You do not see any insuperable difficulty in getting rid of these?—None whatever. I have had a good deal of experience years ago in killing off wild sheep. I asked Mr. Gibson and his manager to keep their shepherds continually out following the sheep up and killing them on the hills during the winter.

1015. Mr. Gibson has been fined?—Mr. Gibson was fined £500. A conviction was obtained last September, but the fine, I believe, was remitted, or, at least, reduced to £5.

1016. You say that that was in September?—Yes; the 3rd September was the date. I had only just come in charge, and I had nothing to do with the case.

1017. Can you state by whom the fine was remitted?—I have no knowledge whatever of that.

1018. Since then have steps been taken against Mr. Gibson?—Mr. Gibson was again fined 4d. a head on 40,000 sheep on the 10th March. A conviction was obtained before Mr. Whitefoord; the fine amounted to £666 13s. 4d.

1019. Has that fine been paid?—I believe not. I believe some bond was entered into in Wellington; I do not know under what circumstances.

1020. You do not know the terms of the bond?—I have seen the bond; I asked Mr. Bayly for a copy about a fortnight ago. It was simply a legal document binding Mr. Gibson to pay this amount within eighteen months I think it was, but I forget now. The reason I applied for it was I thought some conditions were attached as to the money being spent in fencing or something of that kind, but there were no such conditions in the bond I saw.

1021. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Were you consulted as regarded that arrangement?—The only knowledge which I have of the whole thing is that Mr. Gibson, I believe, came to Wellington, and his lawyers drew up a long petition of twenty-eight clauses, which the Government forwarded to me to report upon.

1022. A petition to whom?—To the Government, giving reasons why the penalty should be remitted. I advised the Government not to remit the penalty. These are the closing remarks I made in regard to this: "There is no doubt that the infliction of heavy penalties has to some extent the effect of crippling the resources of the sheepowner; but, on the other hand, the remission of these penalties has not always had the desired effect of encouraging the sheepowner to use stronger measures for cleaning his sheep. I would suggest that, instead of remitting the fine, the sheepowner should be required to enter into an undertaking to expend the amount of the fine in fencing or dipping apparatus; and a time should be fixed for the completion of such work. This would insure some progress being made." I am in favour, decidedly, of having the penalty inflicted; but, from my previous experience, it seemed to me that these gentlemen had only to come up to Wellington to get their fines remitted, and I suggested this rather than that there should be a remission of the penalty.

1023. *Mr. Buchanan.*] An unconditional remission of the penalty?—Yes.

1024. What was done with regard to this petition?—I do not know whether the Government acted on this suggestion of mine.

1025. Would you make it quite clear to the Committee whether, if you were consulted, you would be in favour of any remission of the fine at all, conditional or otherwise, in this case, for instance?—Most decidedly not. I think that the fine should in all cases be enforced by the Government. If there are any special cases of hardship, I suppose the proper course would be to petition the House, or some course of that kind. So far as the Inspectors are concerned, they have nothing to do but to carry out the Act.

1026. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you take any notice of those cases as being of special hardship?—It was very rough country; but, on the other hand, the owner had had five years practically to clean his run, without any fines at all.

1027. Do you think there are any exceptional circumstances in these cases which would entitle them to such consideration?—My opinion is that there are no such circumstances. I think that the time has passed altogether for any clemency. I think they have had quite sufficient time allowed them.

1028. Your opinion is that the Act should be carried out strictly?—Decidedly.

1029. Since you have been in charge, have there been fines inflicted in that district and enforced?—I do not think that I have had, as far as I can recollect, any fines under the 23rd section in the Amuri. When the Act came into force, in the Amuri—in every case I think—the runs were cleaned straight off. One case I might mention: Mr. Holmes got his flock of 6,000 sheep scabby, and he asked my advice. It was very rough country, and I advised him to kill them off. He did so, and for that he got no compensation whatever.

1030. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] I think you said that Glenmark was very easily cleaned?—Yes.

1031. Had not Glenmark been scabby for a very long time?—Yes.

1032. Immediately the fines came into force, was not the country soon cleaned?—Mr. Moore was fined continually for many years before I was Inspector. Going through the list of the Canterbury fines before I came up here, I found that he has paid £3,500 in fines.

1033. Do you think the infliction of the fine had anything to do with those sheep being clean?—Mr. Moore's case is very different from Mr. Gibson's.

1034. Do you think he took more vigorous action on account of the fines?—I do not think Mr. Moore did. I thought he had some other reason for keeping his sheep scabby, because it was very easy country to clean.

1035. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] You said that there were no fines under the 23rd clause: do you mean that they were remitted?—There were none inflicted. I am speaking of what is now the north part of the Canterbury District—that is, of the country south of the Waiau. In those cases they had been clean for some two or three years, and some scabby sheep crossed the river. I gave notice for them to be cleaned, and the scabby sheep were killed within the nine months allowed by the Act, so no proceedings were taken. North of the Waiau I have been in charge two years, and during that time I have had no proceedings to take, excepting for sheep straying, because they have cleaned their sheep.

1036. What about Mr. Gibson's run?—I am speaking of the Amuri Subdivision now.

1037. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Perhaps you will explain, Mr. Foster: you say that in the Amuri District, north of the Waiau, you have not had occasion to take proceedings, and no fines were inflicted?—Not under the 23rd section.

1038. Have there been any under any other section?—Yes; the Act has been carried out with regard to allowing sheep to stray, and things of that kind, but these fines have been paid in every case. There have, however, been only two or three instances. In the Kaikouras the fines, so far as I am aware, have all been paid, except those of which you have had evidence.

1039. Were informations systematically laid?—I have never had a breach brought under my notice for which I have not laid an information.

1040. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do you not think these scabby sheep in the Kaikouras entail very great risk of other flocks becoming scabby?—A very great risk, especially at the Cloudy Range end.

1041. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you insisted upon keeping rams out of the flocks in all cases?—I have given notice in every case since I have had charge of the district. I only took charge last September, and then it was too late to do anything. They had notice previously.

1042. Do you know any case in which no attention was paid to such notice?—Not of my own knowledge. Mr. Gibson did not remove the rams until I made him do so last December.

1043. Were any proceedings taken in consequence?—None whatever.

1044. Was he not liable to the penalty under the Act?—The information should have been laid by the Inspector who had charge of the district previous to my taking charge.

1045. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Does not the Act provide a penalty for every day that the rams are with the ewes?—Yes.

1046. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Would it not have been your duty, coming into charge of the district, and finding proceedings had not been taken in a case like this, to move in the matter?—I suppose, strictly speaking, it would; but, having taken charge of the district from Mr. Bayly, I thought it would be unnecessary.

1047. Had you instructions not to do so?—No; I had no instructions bearing on the case.

1048. Perhaps you would not object to stating what instructions you had?—I do not think I had instructions further than that I should exercise supervision over the district.

1049. I suppose you must from time to time have communicated with Mr. Bayly as to what should be done: was the general tone of his instructions to the effect that you should carry out the Act strictly?—Yes; I have never had any instructions otherwise, at any rate.

1050. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] He gave you no direct instructions?—I had no direct instructions from the head of the department. I was moved there as being, I suppose, a man of experience to be in charge of the district, and to carry out the Act.

1051. *Mr. Pearson.*] You were instructed to carry out the Act?—Yes.

1052. There are wild rams on Gibson's run, are there not?—Yes.

1053. If Gibson kept his rams out of the flock, they would cease breeding?—There would be sure to be some in lamb. The great fault of Mr. Gibson's fencing has been that it is incomplete. He put up a fence from the Clarence half-way up the range and left it there, where it is useless.

1054. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Can you positively warrant any of these flocks in the North Amuri as being clean, so long as these sheep remain scabby?—The only flock in danger is the Cloudy Range flock of Sir Norman Campbell.

1055. That adjoining Highfield?—Yes. If that got infected, Highfield, Mendip, and Lyndon would be also in danger.

1056. Then, do you consider, or do you not consider, any of the flocks free from danger?—So long as this nucleus of scab remains, most undoubtedly the sheep are a menace to the whole district.

1057. You cannot warrant any of these runs as being clean, the sheep from which could go through the scabby run?—No; I should be very sorry to do so.

1058. Do you consider it necessary, or do you not, to enforce the present precautions that are taken with sheep crossing out of this infected district into a clean district? Do you think it necessary to dip these sheep twice before they come out of the infected district into the clean one?—There are some flocks, such as Hawkeswood and Parnassus, that have been clean so many years, that should be dealt with quite differently from such as Lyndon and Mr. Low's, that join infected country.

1059. If you take Parnassus, why do you not take Highfield?—I would: I am only mentioning these as illustrations. I should make a difference between flocks that have been clean for three years and do not join infected country, and those which have not been clean for that time and which do adjoin infected country.

1060. I understand you to say there is a risk?—Yes; but I should say one dip would be quite sufficient to protect Hawkeswood and Parnassus.

1061. If one dip is sufficient, why dip at all?—There might be so little scab that one proper dip would be sufficient to eradicate it.

1062. *Mr. Walker.*] With reference to the division of the Ingles property: have they got a clean certificate for the lower country?—Yes; for the lower farm, which is all fenced in, and in English grass.

1063. There is no condition attached?—There was a condition attached that they should erect a new wool-shed and dip for dealing with the scabby sheep.

1064. They got a certificate before they erected the wool-shed?—Yes.

1065. Do you not think it more advisable for the department, in future, before granting a certificate, to absolutely require the erection of these buildings?—I take it that, once having agreed to the separation of the properties, we have no power to refuse, provided that the Act is carried out. We do not inspect the sheep until three months after the last dip. They were clean at shearing time.

1066. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Are the Messrs. Ingles still in partnership?—I am not aware how they stand in that way: they simply give us certain sheep returns.

1067. You have seen no notice of dissolution of partnership?—No.

1068. You get the *Gazette* regularly?—No; I do not get the *Gazette*. This arrangement was entered into entirely by myself for the protection of the Kaikoura farms. I thought it a great point to gain to prevent Ingles from bringing scabby sheep right into the middle of the district.

1069. Have you recommended the remission of penalties in any case where fines have been remitted?—Never.

1070. Have there been many cases of remission of penalties?—The only ones I know of are these Kaikoura cases. They are the only cases in my own knowledge.

1071. Upon whose recommendation were the penalties remitted?—I am not sure, except as regards the extract I have read in answering Mr. Gibson's petition.

1072. You were not consulted?—I was not consulted in this matter.

1073. You were not consulted prior to the fines being remitted?—No.

1074. You recognize that it is your duty, under the 66th clause, to lay an information every six months, regardless of all other considerations?—Yes.

1075. If you had not done so you would be failing in your duty?—I should think so.

1076. *Mr. Pearson.*] Did Gibson put his rams in again this last autumn?—No, certainly not. They were withdrawn at shearing time, last December. I shall send an Inspector over when the

ewes are mustered for dipping in another month. If any rams are seen with his flock, of course proceedings will be taken against him.

1077. *Mr. Lance.*] We have heard a great deal about the supposed difficulty of cleaning Mr. Ingles's run: do you consider it insuperable?—It is certainly not insuperable.

1078. It would not be necessary to destroy all the sheep?—No; if he had a reasonable amount of fencing.

1079. That fencing is possible?—Yes; it would be far easier than Mr. Gibson's.

1080. *Mr. Buchanan.*] When these fines were inflicted on Messrs. Gibson and Ingles, did you conduct the cases?—I have conducted all the cases since I have had charge.

1081. Had you charge when those fines which have been remitted were imposed?—Not when the first fines were imposed, but when the second convictions were obtained I had charge. I was never assisted by a lawyer.

1082. Is it within your knowledge that the Magistrate came to the conclusion that everything that could be done was done by those gentlemen in cleaning their runs?—I think not. Mr. Whitefoord, the Magistrate who heard the case against Mr. Gibson last March, told Mr. Gibson that the circumstances were such that he could hold out no hope of any remission of the penalties, and would not recommend it.

1083. *Hon. the Chairman.*] He said that in Court?—Yes.

1084. *Mr. Buchanan.*] I am referring to a telegram which appeared in the paper, that went to show that, in consideration of everything having been done that was possible, it was the Magistrate's opinion that the fine should be remitted?—The telegram that you are referring to was entirely wrong, and I considered it my duty to report the matter to the Colonial Secretary. If you will allow me I will read the letter. I sent this to Mr. Cooper, the Under-Secretary, pasting the telegrams on it: "From R. Foster, Amberley, 17th March, 1884.—To G. S. Cooper, Esq., Under-Secretary, Wellington.—I consider it my duty to bring before your attention the above Press Association telegram, which has been published in the leading newspapers. The telegram contains statements which are not true, and are therefore calculated to mislead the Government. The Inspector did not admit that Mr. Gibson had done all that was possible; I simply admitted that he had done a good deal of fencing and had promised to complete certain other fencing which I considered necessary, also that I was satisfied with the mustering so far this season, considering the bad weather he had to contend with. On the other hand, it was proved that the dipping material used last autumn was very inferior, and that the sheep were in a worse state of disease this shearing than at the previous shearing. It is not true that one-half the flocks are clean now, nor is it true that the country is the most rugged in the provincial district; Waipapa, Kincaid, and other runs being infinitely worse to muster. Mr. Gibson's country is practically clear of bush and scrub. I will report more fully in a few days.—REGINALD FOSTER, Inspector in Charge, Kaikoura Sub-division."

1085. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Was it in consequence of that that the fine was remitted?—No. Immediately after the case the Press Association telegram was sent from Kaikoura to the leading newspapers, stating that, notwithstanding Mr. Gibson having done his utmost, the Magistrate had fined him somewhat heavily. I contradicted this in a letter to the Government; but Inspectors are not supposed to write to the newspapers themselves.

1086. Quite so; but that fine was afterwards remitted?—That is the fine for which a bond was given.

1087. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Is it within your knowledge that the Magistrate made any remarks in Court upon the case which might have prompted the Government to remit the fine?—Certainly not. He told Mr. Gibson most distinctly that he could hold out no hope of a remission of the penalty, and would not recommend it.

1088. There were no remarks, either upon the part of the Magistrate or the Inspector conducting the case, to warrant that telegram?—No; we admitted that he had done some sixteen miles of fencing; we admitted also that he had had an extremely bad season for mustering. So it was; we all remember what a bad summer it was.

1089. With regard to this infected district north of the Waiau, the sheep out of which have to be dipped, I have had a table prepared which shows sixteen clean runs within that infected district, with an aggregate of 322,000 sheep. It has been represented to me that in the case of three of these sixteen flocks before they can be dipped they have to travel through four runs; in the case of five more they have to travel through three clean runs; in the case of two they have to travel through two clean runs; in the case of five more they have to travel through one clean run?—Yes.

1090. Now, suppose in the case of any one of these—say in the case of one of the three that have to travel through four runs—the travelling sheep only possess a six-months' certificate?—They might travel with only a three-months' certificate.

1091. Do you consider it a practice conducive to cleaning the country from scab that these sheep should be allowed to travel through four runs, and with scab in the flock to be able as it were to scab these clean runs through which they have to travel?—No; I consider it is one of the greatest flaws we have in the Act. The Act protects clean districts, but does not protect clean runs in infected districts. In all cases where I have an opportunity I ask the owners of any sheep coming from doubtful country to dip the sheep before they leave the station, but we have no power in the Act to compel them to do so.

1092. Is the Tardale Run in your charge?—Yes.

1093. And in the case of Tardale sheep travelling to Canterbury, what would be the route?—The same as all the rest—across the Hammer Plains and through the Leslie Pass to the Waiau to be dipped. We had rather a serious case of that kind this last season, and I drew the attention of Mr. Bayly to it. Some sheep came from the Wairau, I believe; the sheep were perfectly clean, but still all that country is more or less doubtful. Those sheep, numbering some 5,000, travelled through, I suppose, considerably over a hundred miles of country without a dip, through clean runs,

but when they came to the Waiau they had to be dipped twice. In my opinion there should be some provision made in the Act to provide that, at the discretion of the Chief Inspector, sheep travelling in an infected district should be dipped before removal from the run, if the Inspector should require it. Of course there are cases where it would not be necessary, such as Hawkeswood and Parnassus.

1094. Take such an instance as this : what would be the position if a Tarndale sheep got out of a travelling flock on Hamner Plain and afterwards proved to be scabby?—Mr. Low's flocks would have to be declared infected.

1095. What would be the liability to the Tarndale sheep?—The liability would be under the 45th section for allowing sheep to stray, the penalty being not less than £5, nor exceeding £100.

1096. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Does that clause use the word "negligently : " you would have to prove that?—We can in most cases prove negligence. I had four cases against Mr. Gibson a few weeks ago and proved it.

1097. In any part of this district, is there really a defined boundary?—No, none.

1098. *Mr. Buchanan.*] In your opinion, would this secure the safety that is absolutely necessary. Suppose the owners of Tarndale run wish to travel their sheep to Canterbury, and upon the sheep being dipped you brand them ; in a fortnight afterwards, or whatever time you think necessary, you order these branded sheep to be dipped a second time and then let go : would that meet the case?—You mean to have the first dip on the station ?

1099. The second one also ; both on the station?—It would depend a great deal on the country to be gone through. I should prefer the first on the station and the second at the boundary, both dippings to be under the supervision of the Inspector.

1100. The boundary of the infected district?—Yes.

1101. Would you consider it necessary in the case of the Hawkeswood sheep?—Hawkeswood has been clean some ten years.

1102. And there is no reasonable suspicion of their carrying infection?—None whatever.

1103. Would you consider, in the exercise of your discretion, that it was necessary to have those sheep dipped twice?—Certainly not ; but then the Act does not allow any exception to be made. I should be quite satisfied for the sheep to be dipped once.

1104. I am speaking with a view to considering the expediency of altering the Act. If you take my question as being put again with that view, would twice dipping on a station, in your opinion, insure reasonable safety?—No ; I should prefer the sheep to be dipped once on the station and once at the boundary.

1105. And in that case travelling to a common centre, as is done now?—Yes.

1106. Would there not be still an extra risk with that practice of infecting any one of those four flocks as compared with the practice of having two dippings done on the station?—We have to remember that we have no power to control the driving of the sheep in an infected district. A flock of very doubtful sheep might possibly have been driven from one part of the infected district to another without the knowledge of the Inspector. Some of these sheep might be dropped and might join a travelling mob, therefore I think that it would be far the safer plan for the last dipping to take place on the boundary.

1107. Is there any reason why, say, in the case of the district under discussion, you should have a boundary involving so much apparent unfairness as in the case of the Hawkeswood Run?—A wire fence is of no use as a boundary between an infected and a clean district.

1108. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you take the natural boundary in all cases?—We take the natural boundary ; a deep river, such as the Waiau, is to all intents a sheep-proof boundary.

1109. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Is it so in the upper part, say, about the Hamner Plains bridge?—Yes ; quite equal to what it is below : it becomes a narrower, more rapid, and gorgy river.

1110. Would you not be able to compass a good boundary for the infected district, excluding all the clean runs, putting such a place as Hawkeswood, for instance, outside the infected district?—You could not do it without injustice to other flocks. The Leslie Hills Run, for instance, has been clean almost as long as Hawkeswood.

1111. Is it as far removed from actual scab as Hawkeswood?—Yes, I should think so, only in a different direction.

1112. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Have you any other reasons to give to the Committee for not having enforced the 26th clause of the Act against Mr. Gibson than that your predecessor had not done so—the one about the rams, I think, being in the flock?—Well, as a matter of fact, when I took charge was in September ; of course the ewes were lambing at the time, and the mischief was done. I had no instructions whatever about it, and did not know the rams were in the flock until November. I knew that the Inspector had given them notice to withdraw their rams, but whether it had been done or not I was not aware of my own knowledge.

1113. Would not that have been rather a reason for proceeding in the matter?—Yes ; I must confess I think a mistake was made ; perhaps I ought to have proceeded ; but it was a matter that did not strike me on taking charge of the district freshly. If I had known what I do now I should have proceeded.

1114. You had no instructions?—No.

1115. Can you say what instructions were given to the bailiffs put in charge of Mr. Ingles' stock to recover the amount of the fine. Were they instructed to realize or to wait?—They were instructed to sell. I arranged for the dipping of the sheep. I was there myself to look after it.

1116. *Hon. the Chairman.*] To sell at once?—At once.

1117. Not to wait?—Not to wait.

1118. How then was it that the sheep were not sold?—Because Mr. Ingles went up to Wellington, and applied for an interim injunction—I believe it was called—which he obtained.

1119. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] You were speaking of natural boundaries : is there any natural boundary in this infected district, such as you speak of, that would divide the clean flocks in

the infected district from the scabby ones?—None at all that I know of. The only possibility of getting a boundary would be by the Hanmer, into a small river called the Hossack, down to the Clarence; then taking the Cloudy Range boundary. I believe there is another way, taking the wire fence and shutting out the Cloudy Range Run.

1120. You do not know of any?—No, I do not. Sir Norman Campbell has told me that there is, and I have promised to go with him to inspect it.

1121. Would it not be much more convenient, and save a great deal of trouble, if the Chief Inspector was resident in the Middle Island instead of at Wellington: is there, or is there not, a great deal of inconvenience from the Chief Inspector being in Wellington?—Well, I suppose there is some. Of course, I am a subordinate officer.

1122. Yes; and you are the more able to speak on that account, inasmuch as you have to get your orders from the Chief Inspector?—I have found very great inconvenience at times from Mr. Bayly being away from Wellington, and there being no one to consult.

1123. *Hon. the Chairman.*] That is rather against Mr. Robinson's proposal, is it not?—There is not less difficulty in sending to certain parts of the Middle Island than to Wellington: there is much quicker communication with Wellington?—The great difficulty is that the practical head of our department—who, I suppose, is Mr. Bayly—is travelling a great deal of his time, and very often is not get-at-able. Sometimes I am not able to get instructions from him, or advice for a month, so that I have in most cases to take my own course.

1124. Perhaps you can state what then are the duties of Mr. Bayly in regard to your district: is he supposed to come and inspect all the runs?—No, I do not think so. I think he is more an Inspector of Inspectors, to give us instructions and advice when required.

1125. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] There was a Mr. Passau, an Inspector at Kaikoura?—Yes.

1126. Under whose authority was Mr. Passau acting: with whom rested the power to remove him?—Well, the head of the department, I suppose. I have no power whatever.

1127. When was Mr. Passau moved from there?—He was there until quite recently; about three weeks ago, I should imagine; I cannot say positively. It was about the 30th August.

1128. Where is Mr. Passau gone to now?—I believe he is to reside at Blenheim, and to take charge of the Awatere District.

1129. Was there another Sheep Inspector appointed in his place?—There is one now—Mr. Clifton.

1130. Who appointed him?—I suppose he was appointed at Wellington. He is a stranger to me.

1131. Do you know where he came from?—From the Wairarapa. He seems to be a very good, practical man.

1132. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I wish to ask you, Mr. Foster, one or two more questions with regard to Mr. Gibson's run. You know the Greenhill Reserve for shearing?—Yes.

1133. A great deal has been said about that reserve having been leased to Mr. Ward, I think, and no longer being what is usually understood by a shearing reserve: what is your opinion about that?—It has been a great mistake, I think, that it was ever allowed to be used for that purpose. Mr. Wood and Mr. Bullen continually get their flocks infected. I suppose it could not be helped very well, because it is almost impossible to get a dray-road into the Clarence Valley.

1134. *Mr. Walker.*] They pack their wool up?—They bring their sheep right over the range into the midst of clean country to save the cost of packing the wool.

1135. *Hon. the Chairman.*] There is nothing in the Act which, if strictly enforced, would prevent them from taking their sheep there?—No; because it is a portion of the run. They do not travel off the Clarence country.

1136. You just mentioned, with regard to Mr. Ingles' run, that it had been divided in order to enable him to get a clean certificate for a portion of it?—Not so much for that, as to protect the small clean flocks by preventing the scabby sheep from being brought into the midst of the Kaikoura farms.

1137. Here it is just the reverse: a man adds to his run in order that he may take scabby sheep to a place for shearing, and in doing so causes very great risk to his neighbours?—Yes.

1138. Now, do you consider that the Act is satisfactory on that point, or do you think any amendment should be suggested?—I do not see what amendment could be made; there are many similar cases. I should like to prevent Mr. Gibson bringing his sheep over if I could. A lot more fencing has been done on the shearing reserve this winter, which will facilitate the working of the sheep. I do not anticipate so much trouble as before.

1139. One gentleman who has given evidence here has spoken about one step that was taken, which was most effective—namely, that of dipping before shearing. What is your ordinary course?—We have no power under the Act to compel people to dip at all at any particular time. It is only under the first portion of the 23rd clause that we can proceed against a man for not taking proper precautions.

1140. You must leave it to the owner of the sheep to take such precautions as he may think fit?—We do tell him, of course, what steps we consider necessary, and we generally produce in Court any letter we may have written to that effect, with the view of getting heavier penalties inflicted.

1141. Do you think that the Act should be amended in the direction of giving the Inspector power to say what should be done?—I think that should hardly be done in all cases. I do not think that all Inspectors can be trusted with so much power. I should think it would be better if the Chief Inspectors had the power. Any discretionary power, I think, should rest with the Chief Inspectors.

1142. I merely wished to hear your opinion whether you thought the Act should be amended in that way?—I think it would assist us a great deal.

1143. *Mr. Walker.*] Did not the old Canterbury ordinance give that power to the Chief Inspector?—Yes; it was always to the Chief Inspector.

1144. In fact, it gave the department power to step in and clean a man's flock at his expense?—We have that power under this Act, but it is quite unworkable.

1145. But it would be desirable in such a case that the clause should be made more workable?—Really it is hard to think that we should ever have to take such an extreme step as doing the particular things necessary to clean a man's run. In the cases of Gibson and Ingles the first thing I should have to do would be to slaughter one-fourth of their sheep, which I doubt if we should have power to do. All these scabby runs are fully stocked, and it gives no room to work the sheep.

1146. Do you think that the eradication of scab in New Zealand would be facilitated by having a Chief Inspector in each Island?—I should think so from my experience. I think that it is almost impossible for one man to take charge of the whole of New Zealand both as regards sheep and rabbits.

1147. Then, do you think it is advisable that the two Acts should be worked by the same Inspectors?—I think decidedly that the Sheep Inspectors are the best men to undertake the administration of the Rabbit Act. They have a knowledge of the country and of the people.

1148. *Mr. Lance.*] You have worked this Sheep Act for many years and have had great experience of it. The object of this inquiry is to stamp scab out of the country. Can you suggest any alterations in the Act with that view?—I have thought the matter over very much, and my opinion of the Act is that is quite good enough if carried out strictly as far as scab is concerned. I think there are some amendments advisable to deal with such matters as sheep travelling in infected districts: I should like to see some discretionary power given to the Chief Inspectors. The word "negligently" should be struck out of the 45th clause. I consider that it is absolutely necessary that the owner of infected sheep should be made to keep those sheep within his boundary.

1149. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Absolutely?—Absolutely. If a sheep is found outside his boundaries there should be a heavy penalty. That would go a great deal towards cleaning the country.

1150. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Let me refer you to the subsection in section 62: "No abandonment of any such prosecution by any occupier, and no compromise made by any person, shall affect the Inspector's power or duty to prosecute for and recover such fine or penalty." What is the construction put upon that?—It seems to me that, no matter what any private person may do, it is absolutely imperative on the Inspector to take proceedings in all cases of breaches of the Act.

1151. Would not that apply to cases such as I put in reference to Mr. Gibson, both as regards his rams and as regards the remission of the fine?—Well, being only an individual Inspector, I have nothing to do with the recovery of the fine beyond obtaining a conviction and reporting the matter to the Government.

1152. You say it is their duty, not the duty of the Inspector, to recover a fine?—These matters are left in the hands of the head of the department, I presume. I have nothing to do with the recovery of penalties.

1153. Have you ever had any communication from the head of the department upon that subject?—No; none whatever.

1154. You know Hopefield Run?—Yes.

1155. There was a case there I think some time since—a notice to yard, and it was not insisted upon, and scab spread: was that before your time?—That was before my time, I think, but it is impossible to carry out that yarding section in such a country. It would require such an enormous amount of fencing that it would cost more to fence it than the country is worth.

1156. What I want to get at is this: Some owners of sheep have been pressed to comply with the conditions of the Act strictly; ought it not to be equally applied to others, or should some be exempt whilst others are pressed?—Well, I suppose we should have to leave that to the judgment of the Bench when a case is brought before them. In all these cases wherever there are infected sheep the owner should be served with an order to yard them for the protection of clean runs. I have always had this notice issued. In some cases it has been strictly carried out, in others it has been impossible to do so.

1157. Can you state whether the fact of New Zealand being infected with scab interferes with the export of stock to Australia?—I should say it does very materially, from what I have heard. I have heard several people say that there is a very large demand for store sheep in Sydney. That we should have a surplus to export there is no doubt.

1158. Would the prices ruling in Australia be sufficient to encourage an export?—Quite so; the prices that I was given to understand were ruling—I have not seen the papers myself—but I was told that something like 15s. could be obtained for merino ewes, that can be bought for 6s. or 7s. in Canterbury.

1159. Then, it is very desirable that we should get rid of scab?—Very desirable indeed.

1160. There is one other question. Something was mentioned regarding a flock in the Awatere District having obtained a clean certificate, and very soon after—within a week or so—scab having broken out; do you remember the circumstances?—No; it was outside my district; I do not know exactly what run was alluded to.

1161. Molesworth, I think, was alluded to?—I know none of the actual circumstances beyond what I brought out myself in examining Molesworth witnesses shortly after the outbreak of scab. I had to take proceedings against Willis and Fuhrmann for allowing their sheep to stray on Mr. Low's country and on the Tarndale Run. I laid an information in both cases and obtained convictions, and in the evidence I elicited the fact that there was actually scab upon the run.

1164. You have nothing to suggest with regard to amendments in the Act; you are satisfied with it?—I am satisfied with it, with the two or three exceptions I have mentioned. There is one other thing I have forgotten: the notice for mustering is rather too short; instead of twenty-four hours I think it ought to be extended to forty-eight hours. It gives a very short time for people in rough country.

1165. Have you ever heard of any complaint in your district of Inspectors breaking down fences and leaving gates open?—None whatever.

1166. Are you aware whether Inspectors in riding to visit runs take with them means of drawing staples so as to get through fences?—I have never heard of any complaint of that kind.

1167. *Mr. Walker.*] As regards giving notice, are you of opinion that notice should be required in all cases where sheep are got together for other than the purposes specified in the Act?—I think it should be for all cases, certainly. I think the Act is pretty complete on that point.

1168. *Mr. Lance.*] There is one case which has been mentioned in which a man put his sheep under a cliff and drafted out the scabby sheep before the Inspector had come?—Yes, that has been done.

1169. *Hon. the Chairman.*] That is a case you can hardly meet. A man might round up a thousand sheep and take out the scabby ones; he might constantly be doing that, but that would not be a mustering in the terms of the Act?—No.

1170. *Mr. Walker.*] I think that Mr. Bayly mentioned, in reference to that shearing reserve, that last season he incurred a great deal of risk from the fact of twenty or thirty sheep being left there for weeks. In spite of all he could do, the Sub-Inspector was not able to get Mr. Gibson to remove or destroy these sheep. There were lambs among them, and the risks were enormous?—That was before my time; but the same thing occurred this last June. I had four cases at the Magistrate's Court on the 30th August, at Kaikoura, against Mr. Gibson, for allowing sheep to stray from the reserve through the fence. They were very long cases, lasting from 10 in the morning to 7 in the evening. In the course of the evidence I elicited the fact that several other cases of allowing sheep to stray had occurred. We found there were five scabby sheep actually left on the reserve. An Inspector has no power, however, except to lay an information. He cannot destroy the sheep.

1171. *Hon. the Chairman.*] The reserve is fenced?—The part they use for shearing is fenced. Since this season they have fenced in a portion of the hill, so that the risk will not be nearly so great this season as hitherto.

1172. *Mr. Buchanan.*]—Has any such instance as this come under your notice: a penalty hanging over a flockowner upon the discovery of scab, and to escape that penalty the sheepowner dipping, so as to conceal and make it impossible for the Inspector to obtain a conviction?—He could not do so and escape the fine, because an Inspector cannot inspect sheep within three months of their having been dipped, and the time for laying the information would have expired before the three months lapsed.

1173. But take such a case as this: A sheepowner had been ordered to clean his sheep. Near the expiry of the time he found that he could not present clean sheep, and he was dipping them upon the Inspector coming to the station, after having ordered them to muster?—I should say there was something very wrong in the Inspector in such a case.

1174. What proceedings would you take under the Act?—It would all depend upon the Act. The order to clean stands good for six months. Three months after that we examine the sheep for a certificate. Supposing I give you an order to clean on the 1st January, you could not dip your sheep after the 1st July, because you would be exceeding the six months. Supposing you dip your sheep on the 1st August, I should come to your station and examine your sheep on the 1st October. If I found they had been dipped within three months previously I should lay an information against you.

1175. For what?—For being the owner of infected sheep. Under the 23rd clause all sheep are infected that do not hold a clean certificate.

1176. Would you hold that, although no scab is perceptible owing to this dipping having taken place, my sheep were nevertheless infected?—Certainly. I should turn to the interpretation clause in the Act, which states that all the sheep which have been infected shall be deemed infected until a clean certificate shall have been granted for the same.

1177. The interpretation clause defines "Inspector" to mean "any Chief Inspector or any Inspector of sheep who shall be appointed under this Act." Now, you are an Inspector under the interpretation clause?—Yes; I am an Inspector.

1178. The Act says that "no abandonment of any such prosecution by any occupier, and no compromise made by any person, shall affect the Inspector's power or duty to prosecute for and recover such fine or penalty." What should you say to the application of that to such a case as Mr. Gibson's?—I suppose, reading it as you have done, that it is my duty to recover the penalties. It has, however, always been the work of the Government to recover them. I have always taken it that when I have obtained my conviction I should go out of Court, and that I have done with it. I report the matter to the Government by telegraph immediately I obtain a conviction; that is the last I have to do with it.

1179. There is another question I wish to ask. You have said that in some cases you are unable to get instructions from the Chief Inspector for a month?—Yes; when he has been away from Wellington. Of course he has to travel.

1180. I can hardly understand how that could be, if your telegrams addressed to Wellington were forwarded to the Chief Inspector at his last telegraphic address?—Yes, with regard to telegrams one might communicate with him; but there are often matters which one has to write and report on. It is more of these I was thinking. There are some cases we cannot explain in a telegram.

1181. To refer again to the dipping: Within this infected district in the Wairarapa there has been scab for between thirty and forty years. There has never been a Government dip, and any

dipping that may have been ordered—as you ordered it at the Waiau—is always done on the station, there being no other dip?—I can only say that that is illegal. On the removal of sheep from an infected district to a clean one the Act says, “It shall not be lawful for such sheep to be driven, depastured, or suffered to stray to or at a greater distance within the said clean district than three miles from the part of the boundary of the said district at which such sheep are introduced.” They cannot travel more than three miles from the gazetted crossing without being dipped.

1182. But they are dipped at the station?—Are these stations within three miles of the boundary?

1183. That cannot possibly be in the case of all?—Then, that is in contravention of the 43rd section, which is perfectly clear. I in no case allow sheep to travel more than three miles without being dipped.

1184. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You saw the cases reported the other day of sheep being sent from Picton into Nelson?—Yes.

1185. You noticed in the report of that case that the sheep were not dipped?—I think they had got a considerable distance—twelve miles, or something of that sort, and even then they were allowed to come in without being dipped at all. That was against the law?—Perhaps it would not be so, because they were coming from an infected into an infected district.

1186. Is Nelson infected?—Yes.

1187. *Mr. Buchanan.*] I think you said there were only two scabby flocks in the Kaikoura District?—There are three actually scabby flocks.

1188. What is the number of sheep?—About sixty thousand. There are more on the infected list, but they will be off in another six weeks or so.

1189. I have previously stated that the number of sheep in the infected district is over three hundred thousand?—That is in the Amuri you are referring to?

1190. Yes. How many, roughly, would the surplus sheep—that is, those to be disposed of out of that number—amount to within the twelve months?—Of course that is rather difficult to say. I should say from 15 to 20 per cent. would be surplus stock in the Amuri. It is a very good country; the lambing is very good, and it produces a great deal of surplus stock.

1191. Owing to have to dip, what would be the depreciation on this 20 per cent. per head?—Well, I should say, at the very least, 1s. per head over the cost of dipping. I should say it would not be overstating it if I said 2s. per head, including the cost of dipping and depreciation.

1192. So that, practically, that number of sheep is each year subject to a fine of 2s. per head on account of these fifty or sixty thousand surplus sheep?—Yes.

1193. *Mr. Walker.*] Talking of disease generally—foot-rot, for instance—do you think the department can do anything, or that the Act might be amended, so as to keep that down?—I do not think so. I have thought the matter over very carefully, we have had such a great deal of foot-rot in Canterbury this season. I do not see any way to legislate in the matter. The great difficulty is not so much to clean the sheep as to clean the ground.

1194. I dare say you are aware that this season many cases of foot-rot have been communicated by public sale-yards: could not some precautions be enforced to disinfect these sale-yards?—Yes; of course it would be a matter for consideration. I dare say they could be disinfected in some way or other. They have been the means of spreading the foot-rot over the Canterbury District.

1195. Our yards at Ashburton have been?—Yes, and so have the Addington and Rangiora yards also been the cause of spreading it. In fact, I am quite sure the public roads cause the disease to spread. There is no doubt that the matter which exudes from the diseased foot, if it comes into contact with another hoof, might cause the sheep to take the disease, supposing it has been on wet paddocks and got the hoof softened. If the hoof is hard and sound I do not think it would take it. I do not see how you are to meet these cases by legislation.

1196. Do you not think, if you took merino sheep off the hills and put them into a paddock of English grass, that, although there might never have been any foot-rot there before, yet within a short time they would develop foot-rot?—Not necessarily; experience shows rather the reverse. At Mr. Lance's, for instance, the paddock in front of the house has been stocked for years and years, and is just the kind of ground for foot-rot, it being soft oozy soil, yet there has never been any cases there.

1197. Does not the hoof grow very long?—Yes; but not in all cases. In many cases, of course, the hoof grows long, curves round and encloses decomposing vegetable matter. In other cases the sheep gets the disease although the hoof is short.

1198. Are you not of opinion that foot-rot is a greater and more serious scourge than scab?—Most undoubtedly.

Mr. HURSE, re-examined.

1199. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I think, Mr. Hurse, you wish to add something to your evidence?—I wish to add this: That scab in the Colony of New Zealand debarb the neighbouring colonies from purchasing surplus stock here at far enhanced values to those now ruling here. I consider this is a matter of colonial importance. It would not only be several thousands of pounds in the pockets of the sheepowners, but it would also be of great benefit to the public at large, because the money would be distributed here, and each one would get the benefit. When scab is in the colony we can not only not send store sheep away, but we are debarred from sending fat ones also.

1200. Have you, from the inquiries you have made, the means of knowing as to the quantity that could be taken by Australia?—I think the quantity would be almost unlimited, owing to the severe losses occasioned during the last two seasons in New South Wales and Queensland. I have made it my business to inquire into the matter, and I know that several shillings per head would accrue to sheepowners here if they were not debarred, on account of scab, from exporting.

1201. Scab would have to be stamped out of New Zealand for that purpose?—Yes; it would not matter if nine-tenths of New Zealand were clean, one case of scab would debar the colony from exporting.

1202. *Mr. Pearson.*] Do I understand you to say that the Australian Colonies refuse to take any of our sheep?—Yes.

1203. Even stud sheep?—If you take stud sheep there you have to dip them twice.

1204. They quarantine them?—Yes. It simply debars one altogether from sending them there.

1205. *Mr. Buchanan.*] What is the value of a fat crossbred in Sydney?—The value of a 60lb. sheep in Sydney is now £1.7s. They have ruled higher.

1206. Are you aware that we are sending sheep over there regularly?—A few have been sent, but only a very few.

1207. From Dunedin?—Yes; I know a few have been sent.

1208. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What is the case with regard to store stock?—The regulations attending the quarantine of store stock simply debar one from sending them there at all. I may add this in regard to fat stock, of which probably a great number would be exported, and would have been exported this season: I say a 60lb. sheep is worth £1 7s. in Sydney. Here, during the greater portion of the winter months—I am speaking of Canterbury, where the quotations are higher, I think, than in most places in New Zealand—a 60lb. sheep would be worth 15s. That would leave a difference of 12s. a head. The freight and charges, I think, would be about 6s. That would leave 6s. a head profit to the sheepowner were there no quarantine regulations to be complied with. This matter I consider is of importance to every one. I made it my business to inquire into it on purpose to ship and go into it heavily. I wanted to speculate not only in fat stock but also in other kinds. I wanted to ship a lot Home, but I could not do it. In Queensland now merino ewes are fetching £1 5s., and the same sheep here would fetch about 8s. or 10s.

MONDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. R. FOSTER, re-examined.

Mr. Foster, with leave of the Committee, stated, in addition to his evidence: I omitted to state, with reference to the Kaikouras, the course that was pursued in two cases, namely, those of Mr. Collins and Mr. Reese. In Mr. Collins's case, the tenant having died, he had to take possession of his run. He immediately reduced his stock, did a good deal of fencing, and everything that he could to stamp it out. It took four months after he came into possession. We had to lay an information, and on the hearing the case was adjourned for four months to allow Mr. Collins to have every chance to clean his run. The second case was a similar one. Mr. Reese applied to the Government to withdraw his case under similar circumstances. He came into possession suddenly as mortgagee.

1209. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Before the case was brought on again for hearing, had they cleaned their flocks?—Mr. Reese had not time. There was only a month in his case. Mr. Collins cleaned, and holds a clean certificate. Mr. Reese's case comes on about November.

1210. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Are you of opinion that the Magistrate has power of adjourning after you lay an information?—He has power of adjourning for four months. But I can hardly say so; it is a question of law.

1211. It was with your sanction this was done?—Yes; I applied to the Government for permission to deal with Mr. Reese's case in the same manner as we dealt with Mr. Collins's. I may state that in the five months he had possession he put up fifteen miles of fencing. He has mustered three times. The last time he came into the Inspector's account I found the sheep clean—that is, the sheep he purchased—but there are many hundreds of wild sheep in the bush. It was to give him time to kill these that induced me to consent. There is another matter that I should have referred to—that is, with regard to trapping for rabbits. It ought to be stopped, if possible, on account of the ferrets. They destroy a large number of ferrets.

1212. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] There is one thing I should like to have clearly before the Committee: that is, whether it is advisable that poisoning rabbits should be made compulsory, and whether all should be compelled to poison at the one time?—We try to compel them to poison altogether.

1213. Would you consider it desirable to bring in a provision to force all in a district to poison at the same time?—I think it would be a very good thing.

1214. Do you find that rabbits travel over ground that is poisoned?—Yes.

1215. Do you think that poisoning scatters rabbits?—Yes; to a certain extent.

1216. I should like you to say whether you would strongly recommend that there should be legislation to compel all to poison at the same time?—I think it would be a good thing to have in the Act.

TUESDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. J. WARD, re-examined.

1217. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are anxious, Mr. Ward, to add something to your evidence?—The matter was touched upon slightly in my evidence, but I wish more particularly to refer to the fact that the Waipapa Run and that of Mr. Ingles's are exceedingly rough country, a great part being covered with bush and scrub; that now the Waipapa is being fenced—a certain portion, small by comparison—within which they intend to clean and keep it for sheep. The fact I wish particularly to impress upon the Committee is that there is a considerable tract of country outside on which nothing can be done for years unless the wild sheep are thoroughly killed off. My country is more open, so that ultimately I shall be in a greater danger than I am now. When they are fenced on Waipapa there will be an enormous width of country occupied by wild sheep. I do not see any means, if that is fenced, to get rid of those sheep.

1218. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] The owner will be responsible for his sheep?—There are no ear-marks on the wild sheep.

1219. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I gather from your remarks that, in case of the runholder (Mr. Ingles) fencing off the outside hill run, unless some steps are taken to kill the sheep on that part, you will be in danger of being scabbed?—Mr. Ingles has never mixed with me, nor I with him; but I have with Waipapa.

1220. You say that the fencing is not all that is necessary: that the sheep must be killed off the outside country. If the runholders undertake this, you would have to contribute?—Yes; I would be perfectly willing to do so.

1221. Then, you say that some steps should be taken to kill the sheep outside the fences?—Yes. I also wish to state my judgment of the unfairness of the fines. If minimum fines were struck out of the Act; if, instead of fining because sheep are scabby, it were shown that a man could do no more—and that nobody could do more—then I think he ought not to be fined. Fines should be inflicted for neglect.

Hon. Mr. Campbell: That is your opinion.

1222. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] That is your judgment. We have it in evidence that, had the Act been energetically administered, you would have been all clean a long time ago?—Or ruined.

1223. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] I think you told us that your sheep had been scabby for twenty years?—Yes.

1224. You have never paid any fines?—No. For a great many years, as I stated in my evidence, the general impression was that it was impossible to clean; that it was no use to try to thoroughly clean; until the passing of this Act—that is the time from which we should reckon. I should like to point out the unjust principle, because my neighbours have a better country, that the majority should try to tread me out. It is against the industry of New Zealand that anything of the kind should be done. It is as if a man having a large estate an attempt should be made to cut it up.

Hon. Mr. Campbell: We are not going into that; we cannot have that.

Witness: I merely wish to state that the same principle carried out warrants one as much as the other, if the majority has the right to do what it thinks fit.

Mr. J. C. Buckland: For the good of the country; but then you would expect compensation.

1225. *Hon. the Chairman.*] If there is any opinion you would wish to express in regard to the Act or the working of the Act we are ready to hear you; but I do not think you are justified in concluding that the Committee has a foregone opinion. By “foregone conclusion” I allude to proceedings of last year?—I wish to place on record my judgment that the principle of inflicting fines, if carried out, will leave a most unsatisfactory state of things. If this small portion of the Waipapa is cut off, the country being extremely rough, I shall be in greater danger than at any time before. That is the point I wished to lay before the Committee.

Mr. SUTTON, examined.

1226. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You have been in the employment of the Government for some five years?—Yes; when I was first appointed, in 1879, I was sent to Marlborough in charge of the Blenheim Subdivision.

1227. You were then moved to Wairarapa?—Two years afterwards I was removed to Wairarapa, in charge of North and South Wairarapa.

1228. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] What was the date?—In March, 1879, I went to Marlborough; it was the same month in 1881 when I was moved to Wairarapa.

1229. Had you much to do with scabby sheep in those districts?—Marlborough at that time had a great deal of scab in the subdivision I had charge of. I was also about a good deal among the districts.

1230. What was the reason of your leaving?—I was moved to take charge of Wairarapa, on account of having carried out the Act satisfactorily in Marlborough. Scab was rife in the Wairarapa.

1231. Were they making a change, or were you added?—I had charge of the district; there were subdivisions—North and South Wairarapa. There was an Inspector for each subdivision.

1232. In Wairarapa had you many scabby sheep in your district?—Both North and South Wairarapa, when I took charge, were infected, but, shortly afterwards, South Wairarapa got clean. In the north part the scab was pretty bad. It was something marvellous to see the changes that took place. There would be a clean certificate given, say, to-day, and after a time the run would be infected again from different causes.

1233. Can you state the cause of infection?—In one part, on the East Coast, there is a block of Crown land; it was full at the time, and is now, of wild sheep; some of them are very scabby.

1234. Did you make any efforts to clear these places?—Some months after taking charge of the district, when I had looked through it, I saw what was necessary to be done. I applied to the Government, with the result that I was made Crown Ranger, so as to be able to deal with Crown lands. In that capacity I wrote to the Crown Lands Commissioner, stating what I thought was necessary to be done, and asking authority to deal with the wild sheep on Crown lands.

1235. How long was it after you went into the district that you made that application?—About three or four months.

1236. I believe that two hundred odd sheep were killed?—That was a long time after that. I got no reply.

1237. Did you find any difficulty in getting the sheepowners to carry out the Act?—In certain cases I had to lay informations.

1238. Did you lay informations in all cases where the owners of sheep came within the operation of the law?—I used to lay informations, and then sometimes I used to withdraw them.

1239. Why withdraw?—If I laid two or three informations, and I got a conviction, I used to withdraw the next one, because some of the sections work in with others. I never cared if I found men willing to come to terms. I never liked to press, so that they should be fined heavily. I would give them some chance to clean their sheep.

1240. In some cases you obtained fines?—If a man does not clean his sheep in a specified time it is the duty of the Inspector to lay an information. It is left to the Court to judge of the amount of the fine; that is, if the Inspector does not press for a fine. The Court in that case would perhaps inflict the minimum penalty.

1241. Then, sometimes you recommended small fines?—I have stated that when I did not wish to press for a fine then a small fine was inflicted.

1242. Do you not think that the continuance of scab in the district was owing to the manner in which fines were inflicted?—How?

1243. In consequence of your withdrawing cases?—No.

1244. But you did not treat all alike?—It all depended on the circumstances. Some of them promised to do certain things, and afterwards I found that they had not done so.

1245. Did you find that they generally carried out what they promised?—In most cases.

1246. Do you think the Act gave you power to exercise that discretion?—It rests with the Inspector. I was never found fault with by the department in dealing with the Act in that way.

1247. Did you report these cases?—Yes; I used to report and take them into Court.

1248. Did you report those cases you withdrew?—Yes.

1249. And your reasons for doing so?—Yes; they did not disapprove of my doing so. Since I have been in the department I have never heard of them complaining of my administering the Act.

1250. You are not in the service now?—No.

1251. You did not resign?—No, I did not resign. I was ordered to be removed to another district. I applied for leave of absence then. It was refused to me.

1252. And you resigned?—No, I did not resign. They told me that my pay was stopped, and that my services were dispensed with.

1253. They did not ask you to resign?—I simply stated that upon such short notice (six days) I could not leave.

1254. I want to know whether it was through your own wish that you left the service or otherwise?—It was through some representation being made to the Government against my administration of the Sheep Act. I then asked for an inquiry to be made, but up to this time they have not granted it.

1255. Do you know by whom these representations were made?—By two gentlemen in the district.

1256. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You do not say whether you resigned or whether you got notice?—I did not resign; I refused to resign.

1257. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] You state that one of the difficulties in North Wairarapa in cleaning the district was the existence of wild sheep in the bush in certain parts of the district?—Yes.

1258. Was this bush not fenced out from the runs?—Some runs were temporarily fenced. Fencing, unless it is very good, such as rabbit-proof fencing, will not prevent wild sheep coming through.

1259. Have you any experience of that?—Yes; I have seen a dozen sheep hunted through fences—apparently good fences.

1260. Have you known wild sheep to go of their own accord through what is called a sheep-proof fence?—Yes; I have known them to come through and go back again.

1261. Where?—On the East Coast.

1262. How could it be sheep-proof fencing if that was the case?—In fact, there is no sheep-proof fencing if that was not; there is no really sheep-proof fence.

1263. My experience is not in accordance with yours?—I only speak from what I know.

1264. Did you enforce the clause of the Act which requires persons having infected sheep to run these sheep within wire-proof fences or else have them herded?—The regulation fence is supposed to be a sheep-proof fence.

1265. Did you enforce that clause, and never give a certificate until they had a sheep-proof fence: you are aware that it is the duty of the Inspector to lay information against a person who does not run his sheep between sheep-proof fences?—Yes. Where they had not sufficient fences I compelled them to have boundary-men.

1266. Did you cause them to be herded?—That is what is considered to be herding where men are constantly following sheep.

1267. You are aware that under the 27th clause persons not keeping sheep herded by shepherds, where their flocks are infected, when these sheep are not running between good fences, are liable to a penalty of not less than 3d. a head or more than 5s. Have you ever laid an information under that clause?—Yes.

1268. Against whom?—There were two informations laid—against a man named Cross, and against a man named Cameron.

1269. In Wairarapa?—In Wairarapa.

1270. Were the penalties inflicted?—Yes.

1271. Can you say what date that was?—I cannot now.

1272. Were these the only cases brought against persons for not shepherding—for not herding their sheep?—What do you understand by the term "herding?"

1273. Having men in immediate charge?—But not to keep them altogether in one mob. You could not expect a runholder, say that he has seventeen thousand sheep on his run, to keep them all herded together in one place. He can only keep his boundary, and not allow his sheep to stray off his land.

1274. The term "herding" is well known in sheep-farming: it implies that a man shall be in immediate charge of sheep; it means that these shall be constantly followed up and kept in sight?—That is right enough, but it depends upon the country. It would be impossible for a man or men in certain kinds of country to keep sheep in sight.

1275. In that case he must not keep them there?—Then, where will he take them to?

1276. You have not enforced the Act according to this meaning of the term; in fact, you have dispensed with this clause: you simply interpreted the term “herding” as meaning that a man must keep his boundary?—In country where there are gullies and rocks it is impossible to keep sheep in sight.

1277. Were you not bound to give effect to the Act as you found it, and not your own judgment?—Most men must use their own judgment in certain cases. A man, with open country in paddocks, where he can see his sheep all day, is in a different position from the man in a rough country.

1278. Then, you have not given effect to the Act according to the interpretation provided by the Act itself; you merely looked to what you considered was best in your own opinion?—Yes.

1279. *Mr. Dodson.*] Disregarding the interpretation clause altogether?—I did not disregard it.

1280. You said it was with the Inspector to press for a penalty or not?—If the Court asked whether the Inspector pressed for a heavy fine, it was left to the Inspector.

1281. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] In what clause?—I do not think there is any clause.

1282. Did you consider it to be within your power to withdraw cases?—The department did not disapprove of my doing so.

1283. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Are you aware that under the 66th clause it is the duty of the Inspector to lay a fresh information at the end of every six months?—Yes.

1284. How can you reconcile it with your duty under the Act to withdraw in such a case?—I have not withdrawn. I always laid the information at the expiration of the time. But nine months are allowed to a sheepowner to clean his sheep.

1285. But you stated that in some cases you have withdrawn?—Yes, under other sections of the Act, such as not having materials for dipping. I have withdrawn cases of that sort.

1286. Where is your authority for that? Can you show it to me in the Act?—I used to use my own judgment.

1287. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you know whether, in carrying out the Act, there is any clause that, in your opinion, should be amended so as to make the Act work more efficiently?—Yes, in the branding clause; I would suggest that where a person has, say, forty thousand sheep, and he gets one portion of them infected, the brand should be placed on the diseased flock, and not compel him to brand the whole of his flocks.

1288. How would the others be branded?—With the ordinary station-brand.

1289. And with the ordinary colour, whatever that might be?—Yes; but have the infected brand on the diseased flock or flocks. In large runs they will have part of the run free of disease, which may lurk merely in a small corner. In many runs, the diseased and clean sheep need never be near to each other.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND, M.H.R., examined.

1290. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Can you give us information about the working of the Sheep Act in Auckland?—Yes.

1291. Auckland is an infected district, I believe?—Yes; at the same time I should state that there is no very large number of sheep there, and not a large number of them scabby.

1292. Could you inform the Committee of the names of the subdivisions in which there is scab?—There is scab, I think, in almost every district.

1293. I have a return here of the Auckland subdivisions?—I see that that paper represents all the districts in which scab exists. The sheep that are actually scabby are very few, and the flocks are very small, and kept within boundaries, so that they ought to be easily cleaned. In Mangare they have had scab for twenty years back; in fact, I think they have pretty well supplied scab to other places. But I wanted to talk to the Committee rather about imported sheep. An instance of the working of the Act came under my notice last year, when Mr. Bainbridge got his flock scabby. They were dipped. He was giving up his farm in two months. As a matter of fact he did not really know whether it was scab or not. He proposed to put them (the infected sheep) in a paddock at the other side of the road. He offered to take every possible precaution—even to covering the road with straw, and burning it afterwards, or carting them. But Lewis absolutely refused to let him remove the sheep. There were, I should say, about four hundred altogether. The Inspector would not allow Bainbridge to shift them. Bainbridge left his farm, but this matter cost him almost as much as the sheep were worth. He had no end of trouble and bother. If he could have put them as he intended upon the clean part of his farm, he would have got them clean. He could have got rid of scab altogether. This district of Mangare has never been quite free of scab for the last fifteen or twenty years. I dare say there are about ten thousand sheep in Mangare. That would be about all.

1294. Then, there is no reason why sheep should not be clean there?—We had an outbreak of scab on our farm a good many years ago. We cleaned them with the greatest ease, and got rid of it completely. It was then much more difficult to deal with than now, because there was not so much fencing as there is now.

1295. What reason can you assign for the state of things you mention: is it to be attributed to the Act itself, or the way in which the Act is carried out?—It is the way it is carried out; it is the hard-and-fast rule which will not allow people to get rid of scab themselves. Here was the case of a man proposing to shift his sheep for the sole purpose of getting them clean, and yet they would not allow him to do so. As to the scab, Mr. McLaughlin, who also lives near Mangare, took a piece of wool, and put two scab insects upon it, placing them in a glass tube. He kept them in the glass tube, which was sealed. After keeping it there for two years he examined it, and found the scab alive, and also another scab insect. What we complain of is, that the scab is not stamped out. We believe it would be easy to kill it everywhere. There appears to be a sort of feeling that the Inspectors do not want to work themselves out of a billet, and consequently that scab is not got rid of. Almost all of the people I have met with have some opinion of that kind.

1296. But the Inspector in Auckland is a capable man, is he not?—Yes; he appears to be very officious, watching every dip, and anxious to have everything up to the mark. But still we do not get rid of scab. We have a feeling in Mangare that the district should have been clean before now. When sheep come from the south they get a clean bill. When landing they are passed by the local Inspector. They are then dipped so as to be allowed to get into the yard. They get fearfully knocked about. They are often killed immediately afterwards. It makes a difference to the butchers and sellers, and the sheep are depreciated in value. Those sheep that are to be killed should, I think, escape this dipping. They think that to cure scab they must dip everything, even where there is no scab. The West Coast is an infected district, but the East Coast is clean. They treat the East Coast exactly in the same way as the West—all the sheep are run through this dip to the immense loss of those concerned, and to the great pain and injury to the sheep.

1297. *Mr. Lance.*] What is the dip, lime and sulphur?—Yes.

1298. Is it a hot dip?—Yes. But it depreciates the whole sheep; the wool is depreciated. They will not allow one to come through without it from the Bay of Plenty or Napier, which are clean districts. There is no exception made, every sheep must be dipped. But I should say that if the yards are supposed to be dirty some steps ought to be taken to clean the yards.

1299. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You would suggest that, if it is considered necessary, they should be dipped after leaving the yard if going up country?—Yes; but if not going up country they ought to be killed without this dipping.

1300. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] In winter, if the sheep are landed without going into the yards, would there then be a necessity to dip?—You are not allowed to take them into the country. Directly you land them you must put them into secure paddocks, and you must not drive them more than three miles. I think that where they come from a clean district they should be accepted, but from a scabby district they ought to be dipped. But in the case of fat sheep there should be no necessity for putting them through this ordeal, specially if they come from clean districts.

Hon. the Chairman: But it has been suggested that the ship in which they come may not be clean.

Mr. Buchanan: That is exactly the answer to the suggestion of Mr. Buckland; the district may be clean, but we do not know whether the ship is.

1301. *Hon. the Chairman.*] It has been suggested that certificates should be given to vessels for carrying sheep?—I dare say that would do, but I have an opinion that the slushing, washing, and cleaning that is constantly going on aboard ship is a protection. Everything is slushed with salt water, and salt water must have a depressing influence on scab.

1302. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] Is it not surprising that it should have lasted so long in Auckland: can you give any reason why it has lasted so long?—I think it has lasted so long, for one reason, through the partial action that has been taken in dealing with some cases, and in not trying to stamp it out with sufficient energy when it has been known to exist. There are some men who have had it off and on for fourteen or fifteen years.

1303. Is there more than one case?—There has lately been one, which, I think, came under Mr. Lewis's notice. But one man has had it many years, while all his neighbours try to get cured. There is one man who, if he killed all his sheep, would do very much to get rid of it in his district. He, some time ago, bought a lot of scabby sheep in a bad stage of the disease. I think he paid about 1s. 6d. a piece for them.

1304. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do you say that these were bought in a public yard?—They were bought on the farm and they were dipped on the farm.

1305. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] How long ago since that happened. About seven years ago.

Mr. Buchanan: That is an important point to know.

1306. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Then you blame your Inspector for not allowing one man to shift his sheep, which he had reason to believe were infected, to a clean portion of his ground at the same time that a case of this kind could occur?—Yes, that came under him.

1307. Are you aware that on large runs, in some cases, scab has been completely cured with one dipping, without shifting sheep from the infected ground?—It must have been a very peculiar dip, or the infection must have been very slight. What we especially wish to get rid of is all this useless dipping: they insist on dipping the East Coast sheep, which are clean, just the same as the West Coast sheep, which are scabby. That is the point that I particularly wish to bring before the Committee.

MONDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. P. B. BOULTON, examined.

1308. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are Chief Inspector under the Sheep Act in the Canterbury District?—Yes.

1309. What are your boundaries?—My boundary is from Waiiau in the north to Waitaki in the south.

1310. You reside at Christchurch?—Yes; chiefly at Christchurch.

1311. Will you state to the Committee whether you consider the Sheep Act works satisfactorily in your district?—It is worked satisfactorily in the Canterbury District.

1312. Can you speak of any other districts: you appear to speak guardedly in referring to "Canterbury"?—No; but in some infected districts I think it has been carried out in a manner somewhat lax.

1313. What is the reason?—I do not think all the clauses have been strictly enforced.

1314. Will you be good enough to explain more particularly?—Under the Act certain infected districts were allowed two years: afterwards another year for cleaning. I do not think that pressure was brought to bear to make people clean sheep during the time that the clauses were suspended. I do not say that in all cases.

1315. The three years have expired?—Yes; the three years have expired.

1316. Do you think that the Act has been properly enforced since then?—I cannot say; but if pressure had been brought to bear—I take it the 66th clause was framed for that purpose—all these people would have been doing something towards cleaning their sheep.

1317. Besides the clauses which suspended the operations of the Act in certain places, there was a special clause, the 66th clause, which provided for certain things to be done, and that was never acted on?—No.

1318. So far as your own district is concerned, I suppose you had no occasion to act with stringency?—No; Canterbury is a clean district.

1319. There was a portion of Canterbury that was infected?—That was for the time being created into a district by itself: the Waiau Sheep District.

1320. Are you aware that the existence of scab in New Zealand is very serious for the colony?—I should say most serious.

1321. Will you explain how?—As far as Canterbury is concerned we are always running the risk of having the infection brought into Canterbury. It stops the importation of sheep from the Amuri District.

1322. But I would ask you, with reference to the colony as a whole, whether it is not seriously affected by its being known to be infected with scab?—I should say so, for we cannot export sheep to the Australasian Colonies.

1323. Is there opportunity for doing so?—Yes.

1324. Do you think you could export with a profit?—Yes.

1325. If it were not for the infection?—If it were not for the infection in New Zealand.

1326. Then, again, within the colony itself, one may suppose that it is a great loss to those who have clean sheep if they happen to become infected?—Yes; also because of the charges they have to pay in passing sheep from one district to another.

1327. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] The Canterbury sheep are all clean?—Yes.

1328. Did it not happen two or three years ago—I forget the time exactly—that some scabby sheep were discovered in the yard at Canterbury?—Yes; some years ago, in 1875.

1329. Was it ever ascertained where these scabby sheep came from?—Yes; as far as I can remember, they were sheep that had been sold from a farm in the Glenoamaru Run.

1330. Had you anything to do with giving the Inspector any instruction about these sheep?—No.

1331. Was he supposed to act under your instructions?—To a certain extent.

1332. Now, you think there is a great deal of risk of introducing scabby sheep into the District of Canterbury?—I consider there is great risk.

1333. Do they dip when they come into the district?—On the boundary.

1334. Are they supposed to be dipped once or twice?—They are supposed to be dipped twice.

1335. Are they supposed to be dipped under the supervision of an Inspector?—Yes.

1336. Are they supposed to be efficiently dipped, that is to say, in a dip that will cure scab?—They should be.

1337. You say there is great risk in bringing sheep out of an infected district into Canterbury unless they are efficiently dipped?—I think there would be very great risk.

1338. When these sheep were passing, Mr. Foster was under your supervision?—Yes.

1339. Was he supposed to carry out the Act by dipping in a hot dip?—Yes.

1340. Now, of course, you knew that these sheep were coming out of an infected district?—No.

1341. Were you aware of it at the time?—No, I was not aware of it until afterwards. I was not aware of it until the end of April.

1342. I want to know when you became aware that these sheep were not efficiently dipped, and whether you took any proceeding upon becoming aware of the fact; whether you remonstrated, wrote to, or corresponded with any one in relation to it?—I proceeded up the Waiau and had an interview with the lessee of the dip there. I requested him to produce his books with the number of sheep dipped from the 1st January. I think it came up to about the middle of May. I found that there were thirty thousand odd sheep dipped, and that out of this number twenty thousand odd had been dipped with Little's dip.

1343. Hot or cold?—Cold.

1344. Was the Inspector whose duty it was to look after this matter present?—It was with Mr. Foster's sanction that these sheep had been dipped with Little's dip.

1345. You say he sanctioned the dipping of these sheep coming from the Amuri District to be dipped with Little's dip?—Yes.

1346. Have you any evidence of it?—I can prove it. I entered into a correspondence with Mr. Foster on the subject. I never spoke to him upon it. Our communications upon the subject were all by correspondence.

1347. Have you got that correspondence?—I have copies, but the original correspondence is in the hands of the Government. It has never been acknowledged. I have never had any acknowledgement.

1348. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] What year?—This year.

1349. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What is the title of the correspondence?—“*Re Dipping Sheep from the Amuri into Canterbury.*”

Hon. Mr. Robinson: I should like to have this correspondence read; we can get the originals by applying for them.

The Chairman: I shall read the letters.

Mr. P. B. BOULTON to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 24th June, 1884.

I have the honour to enclose correspondence with Inspector Foster with reference to the dipping of sheep on crossing the boundary from Marlborough and Amuri into Canterbury.

It appears that since the 1st January, 1884, contrary to my opinion and without my sanction, some twenty thousand sheep have been admitted into Canterbury which have been dipped in Little's composition, which I do not consider a reliable scab-destroying preparation. I need only refer to the outbreak of scab in New South Wales to bear me out in this opinion. In that case the sheep were dipped three times in Little's dip, and in five months found to be infected with scab. I have also been informed that it has been used extensively in the Wairarapa District, and has there been a failure. If the use of Little's dip, which is a cold dip, had been sanctioned, there would have been no necessity for incurring the expense of putting in new boilers at the Waiau.

I would never have given my sanction to certain concessions which were made to some owners of sheep on the north side of the Waiau in March last.

I have, therefore, considered it my duty to report the matter to the Government.

I have, &c.,

P. B. BOULTON,

Chief Inspector of Sheep.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

MEMORANDUM from Mr. P. B. BOULTON to Mr. R. FOSTER.

COMPLAINTS have been made to me with regard to the dipping at the Waiau, and I shall be going there on Tuesday to see Fraser with regard to that, and also what repairs are required at the dip. P. B. BOULTON.
Christchurch, 31st May, 1884.

MEMORANDUM from Mr. P. B. BOULTON to Mr. R. FOSTER.

IN accordance with my memorandum to you of the 31st ultimo, I went to the Waiau on Tuesday, the 3rd instant, and, from inquiries made from the lessee of the dip, I ascertained that upwards of twenty thousand sheep, out of a total number of 30,700 sheep, which have been brought into Canterbury from Amuri since the 1st January, have been dipped in Little's dip (cold). Amongst this number are 4,500 sheep of McArthur's, from the Wairarapa District; there are also 1,500 sheep from the Gladstone Run, the dipping of which you stated to me when last in town should be conducted with especial care. I have never been apprized that Little's dip was in use.

You will recollect on a former occasion I declined to sanction the use of this composition. I have been informed that several lots of sheep have been dipped without any supervision whatever—namely, on the 29th February, 1,004 sheep from Lyndon, and on the 28th March fifteen sheep from Lyndon. I shall be glad if you will give me an explanation on these subjects to accompany my report which I have to make to the Government.

Christchurch, 7th June, 1884.

P. B. BOULTON.

MEMORANDUM from Mr. R. FOSTER to Mr. P. B. BOULTON.

IN reply to your memorandum of the 7th instant, *re* complaints made, as I understand, by Mr. Tinline, of Lyndon, about the dipping of sheep crossing the boundary at Waiau, I have to state that since the representations made to me by the owners of clean flocks in the Amuri, which were forwarded to Mr. Bayly, and referred to you for your opinion, I have thought it advisable to make some distinction between sheep from flocks which have been clean for a number of years, and those from runs adjoining or in close proximity to infected runs.

My practice, therefore, has been to use Little's dip, which these owners use themselves, if they dip at all, for the sheep from clean runs, and lime and sulphur for the sheep from doubtful localities. This was strictly adhered to until, on the 9th April, when Mr. Low's sheep were being dipped for the second time, the old boiler gave way and the sheep had to be finished with Littles' dip. This course was rendered necessary because it would be impossible to dip sheep in lime and sulphur with only one boiler.

The sheep from the Wairarapa and Gladstone, in the Awatere, came from clean flocks, and did not cross infected country. The former were carefully inspected by Inspector Scaife and myself, and, having been three weeks on the road, would have shown disease plainly had there been any infection in them. The Gladstone sheep were dipped in lime and sulphur before starting; they were properly dipped by Inspector Scaife in Little's dip, at a strength of 1 to 85, and were afterwards seen by me.

The 1,004 Lyndon sheep, which Mr. Tinline complains were dipped without the supervision of an Inspector, were sheep fattened for freezing, which I had promised Mr. Tinline should be knocked about and delayed as little as possible. I accordingly instructed Fraser to go on with the dipping, as I had to ride from Montrose (sixteen miles). I arrived immediately after the sheep were finished, and saw that all had gone through the dip. These sheep were dipped on the 29th April.

The fifteen rams, also from Lyndon, for Mr. W. Macfarlane, had to be crossed in a hurry, as two large lots were due. I therefore allowed Fraser to dip them, as Inspector Scaife was away, and I could not attend. These sheep, however, came from a paddock close to the station, and were beyond all suspicion.

With regard to the use of Little's dip, my neglecting to inform you that I was using it was an oversight on my part, but I may point out that many of these sheep went through the Addington and other saleyards, and would be seen either by Inspector Holderness or yourself. I may say, however, that I am of opinion that it is a perfectly safe dip to use for Hawkswood, Parnassus, Mendip, Highfield, Sherwood, Lyndon, and Leslie Hills sheep, all of which flocks have been clean for several years, and for which flocks a cold dip is invariably used. The sheep from these runs have been dipped to my satisfaction, and I consider the using of a cold dip was a fair concession to make to the owners of these flocks. The use of Little's dip for the rest of the sheep was rendered absolutely necessary after the boiler gave way, but I consider it was quite safe to use it at 1 to 85. This dip has been proved in Marlborough to be a cure for scab. I would not use it however for bad sheep.

I would remind you that, when the Hurunui was the boundary, the Canterbury Inspector had no knowledge of the flocks from which sheep came; whereas now, as Inspector of both sides of the Waiau, I have an intimate knowledge of the flocks of the North.

I most unhesitatingly say that all sheep which have crossed the Waiau have been treated in compliance with the law, and in such a manner as to render any introduction of disease into Canterbury impossible. The only complaints which have ever been made were that I gave the sheep as careful a dipping as though I knew them to be diseased; and I would further submit that it is hardly probable that I, who have had charge of the Canterbury boundary for nearly eight years, during which time I have admitted many thousands of sheep into Canterbury without any outbreak of disease occurring, would risk my reputation by allowing any such contingency to occur.

10th June, 1884.

REGINALD FOSTER,
Inspector of Sheep.

MEMORANDUM from Mr. R. FOSTER to Mr. P. B. BOULTON.

ON reading your memorandum of the 7th instant, after replying to it this morning, I notice that you intend forwarding a report to Government; in such case will you please let me have copies of the information you have received, in order that I may know what I have to reply to.

I do not wish to alter one word of my memorandum of this date, but there may be other matters to answer. I should like the position to be fully placed before the Government, because I shall ask for an inquiry into the whole matter, in order that the opinions of others besides Messrs. Tinline and Lowe may be heard.

10th June, 1884.

REGINALD FOSTER,
Inspector of Sheep.

MEMORANDUM from Mr. R. FOSTER to Mr. P. B. BOULTON.

I AM in receipt of your memorandum of the 14th instant, informing me that you have no additional information to give me relative to the complaints which have been made as to the dipping of sheep at the Waiau Government Reserve.

In reply, I would respectfully submit that I should be informed who has made these complaints, and what the substance of their complaints is, in order that I should have a fair opportunity of stating my own case.

If this matter has to go before the Government, this course will be absolutely necessary sooner or later.

REGINALD FOSTER,
Inspector of Sheep.

16th June, 1884.

MEMORANDUM from Mr. P. B. BOULTON to Mr. R. FOSTER.

In reply to your memorandum of the 16th instant, I have to reply that my memorandum of the 31st ultimo did not refer to any complaints having been made against you in regard to the dipping at the Waiau, and my visit to the Waiau was not made with the view of investigating your action in regard to the dipping, but that of the lessee of the dip. My memorandum was written to you with the view of having your assistance at the investigation. That investigation disclosed facts which, in my position as Chief Inspector for Canterbury, appeared to me to show that the dippings prescribed by law, and which dippings I considered all-important for the security of the clean districts south of the Waiau, had, under your superintendence, and in spite of what you knew to be my strong feeling on the matter, degenerated into a mere matter of form.

Consequently my subsequent memorandum of the 7th instant was written to you, and I should wish you to understand that it is merely the result of my inquiries from the lessee of the dip, and not to any complaints against you which resulted in that memorandum.

18th June, 1884.

P. B. BOULTON.

RETURN of SHEEP introduced from INFECTED DISTRICTS into CANTERBURY.

Date of First Dipping.	Date of Second Dipping.	Owner.	Station.	No. of Sheep dipped.	In what Material dipped.	Strength of Dipping Material.	Under whose Supervision.
1884.	1884.						
Jan. 1	Jan. 3	Macfarlane, J. ..	Hawkeswood ..	2,012	Little's	1 to 100	
" 4	" 17	Tinline, J. ..	Lyndon ..	29	"	1 to 100	
" 19	" 24	Wharton and Co. ..	Cloudy Range ..	2,300	Lime and sulphur ..	..	Inspector Foster.
" 28	Feb. 1	Atkinson, W. ..	Woodbank ..	650	" .. ..	..	" Scaife.
Feb. 5	" 8, 9	Moffatt, W. J. ..	Parnassus ..	2,397	Little's	1 to 100	" Foster.
" 15	" 18	Macfarlane, J. ..	Hawkeswood ..	2,161	"	1 to 100	" Foster.
Mar. 8	Mar. 8	Tinline, J. ..	Lyndon ..	35	"	1 to 100	" Foster.
" 15	" 19	McDonald, A. ..	Sherwood ..	117	Lime and sulphur ..	..	" Scaife.
" 21	" ..	Moffatt, W. J. ..	Parnassus ..	3,172	Little's	1 to 100	" Foster.
April 1	April 3	McArthur, J. ..	St. James's ..	1,762	Lime and sulphur ..	..	" Scaife.
" 5	" 8	Low, W. A. ..	St. Helens ..	4,317	" .. ..	..	" Foster.
" 19	" 21	McArthur, J. ..	Wairau District ..	4,594	Little's	1 to 85	" Scaife.
" 10	" 12	Low, W. A. ..	St. Helens ..	2,890	First dip, lime and sulphur; second dip, Little's ..	1 to 100	" Scaife.
" 29	" ..	Tinline, J. ..	Lyndon ..	1,004	Little's	1 to 100	No one present.
Mar. 13	" ..	Wharton and Co. ..	Highfield ..	3,213	"	1 to 100	Inspector Scaife.
" 28	Mar. 29	Tinline, J. ..	Lyndon ..	15	"	1 to 100	No one present.
" 29	Twice same day	Jones, E. ..	Rotherham ..	182	"	1 to 100	"
May 15	May 17	Tinline and Neville	Gladstone ..	1,518	Little's, first dip .. " second dip	1 to 85 1 to 100	Inspector Scaife.

The within information was obtained from the books of the lessee on the 3rd June, 1884.

24th June, 1884.

P. B. BOULTON,
Chief Inspector of Sheep.

1350. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] I would ask the witness whether he thinks he could with safety relax any measures adopted for dipping for scab in respect to sheep crossing the Waiau?—No; I think that so long as there is disease in the Kaikouras there should be no relaxation. The Kaikoura District comes down to the Conway. The Conway bounds the north side of the Amuri District. There is scab on the southern boundary of the Kaikoura District.

1351. Do you recollect how long Mr. Low's large flock had been clean: how long Mr. Low had held a clean certificate?—I think it was about eighteen months; I am not certain whether it was fifteen or eighteen months.

1352. Are you aware that there are infected runs adjoining Mr. Low's?—His run is so extensive; but I might say that a number of runs are called clean; yet, so long as there are wild sheep about, I cannot see what safety there can be for any of those runs.

1353. Do you know whether Mr. Low adjoins a place called Molesworth?—Yes; I think it does.

1354. While Molesworth was infected, were there not a number of sheep which got off the Molesworth on to Mr. Low's run?—Yes; I was informed so.

1355. Do you think there is anything like a good boundary existing between the clean flocks in the Amuri District and the infected ones?—There is no boundary worth speaking of; there is only an imaginary boundary.

1356. I am speaking as to north of the Waiau?—There is no boundary. The Conway is no boundary. It is simply a shingle-bed, with rivulets running through it. There is no boundary at all.

1357. Now, Mr. Foster, speaking of these sheep, says that you would be able to detect the condition of these sheep in the Addington yards; but supposing that, could you tell whether they had been properly handled, and whether they had been properly dipped?—I would have known that they had not been dipped with lime and sulphur.

1358. Are you of opinion that any or no alteration should be made in the Act with regard to the north of the Waiau until the Kaikoura is clean; that is to say, should any fresh subdivision take place?—No change should be made until the Kaikoura is clean, or until the Marlborough District is clean.

1359. Do you think that the Act is clear and intelligible, and one that it is advisable should be put in full operation, so that thereby sheep should be cleaned?—The Act, if it is worked stringently and carried out in its integrity, is a very good Act, and will clean any district.

1360. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are of that opinion?—Yes; I should say so.

1361. Can you make any suggestion as to any amendment or alteration it would be desirable to propose?—No.

1362. Do you think there should be any alteration in the Act at all?—Not the slightest.

1363. From your knowledge of the Act, are you satisfied that it is quite sufficient to force people to clean their scabby sheep?—I consider it a very good Act, and that it does not require any amendment with regard to scab.

1364. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Will you look at these suggested amendments from the District of North Wairarapa. It would require me to compare them with the Act before I could give any opinion upon them. My opinion is that there is not the slightest necessity for any amendment in the Act.

1365. What I wanted to elicit was, if you could see any tendency which would enable you to say that it would endanger the cleaning of flocks, or encourage non-cleaning in any particular direction, if the Act were altered: that would enable you to inform the Committee whether the alterations suggested would be an injury rather than otherwise?—If you once begin to amend or alter an Act you do not know where the change may end.

1366. I would ask you whether, in a different district in which there are numerous small flocks—in a case where scab is discovered and a slaughterhouse is near that place—would you not think it a benefit where sheep had not been driven through a clean country: would it not be an advantage, if the owner of these sheep wished to kill them, that they were properly dipped and taken to the slaughterhouse and killed?—It could not be done where there are large runs.

1367. You would leave it to the discretion of the Inspector?—It would be his duty to see that they were properly dipped, and that no danger could arise in driving to the slaughterhouse.

1368. My reason for asking the question is, that there is quite a different state of affairs with us from that which you refer to in large runs. In case of small owners it would be of advantage to them if it could be done. There are persons of opinion that it could be done, even with more safety to the public.

Hon. Mr. Robinson: The witness would understand the question better if the question were put in this form: Whether, if Mr. Boyne's sheep were to get scabbed, it would not be safer to take them to the slaughterhouse and slaughter them at once.

1369. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Is it so?—There can be no difficulty about cleaning a small flock of sheep.

1370. But the sheep being fat, the owner would suffer: the question is whether the public safety would be endangered from driving these sheep when dipped to the slaughterhouse?—I am strongly of opinion that infected sheep should not be allowed to travel.

1371. Not from a place, say, within three miles distance?—No.

1372. Do you think they could leave any infection in being driven from the dip to the slaughterhouse?—Yes; it is very easy for them to leave infection, specially upon a road where they meet all sorts of conveyances.

1373. I could understand that where you have large flocks. I am asking your opinion?—My opinion is that it could not be done with safety.

1374. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Put some definite number, say the case of a flock of sheep numbering more than five hundred and less than five thousand?—

1375. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] With five thousand sheep the case would be different. It is only where the flocks are small that it could be adopted. Where the owner is agreeable that they should be killed the public would run less risk than they would from the attempt to clean them?—I am quite opposed to the removal of any infected sheep. I cannot see that they would be fit to slaughter after having been dipped.

Hon. Mr. Williamson: But they are slaughtered every day in the year with us. Every sheep is bound to be dipped when it arrives.

1376. *Captain Russell.*] You are opposed to any patent dips?—Yes; as far as infection from scab goes.

1377. You think none of them are efficient for the cure of scab?—None of them.

1378. Have you had any experience of Thomas's and Cooper's dips?—I have no experience. But some of the patent dips might perhaps be used for lice or ticks.

1379. Not for scab?—Certainly not.

1380. You say you have no experience?—No; I never saw Cooper's dip.

1381. Or Thomas's?—No.

1382. Do you think that lime and sulphur is the only specific?—It and tobacco and sulphur is the only reliable curative that I know.

1383. You could not say, from your own knowledge, whether any other dips would answer the same purpose?—No,

1384. You have never used them?—No.

1385. *Mr. Buchanan.*] It appears that in the Amuri infected district there are three flocks holding clean certificates, which have to come through fourteen other flocks before they get to the Government dip. Now, supposing any of these flocks infected when coming down to the Waiau, you would consider it necessary to dip them in lime and sulphur?—It is my opinion that, if they are not dipped in lime and sulphur, you might as well pass them over the boundary without dipping at all.

1386. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do you not think that the Inspector in charge should live in the neighbourhood, or at the station where there are infected sheep; if it were intended that the district should be cleaned, ought he not to reside in the neighbourhood?—Yes; I think he should,

1387. *Mr. Lance.*] Is it not a fact that there is an Inspector resident in the Kaikoura always?—Yes; there is an Inspector resident there.

1388. You say the Act itself does not require amendment, but has it been brought under your notice that, under the description of the word "run" in the interpretation clause, if the owner has one portion of his property infected with scab while the other portion is clean, can he, by transferring his interest in the infected portion to some other person, get the other portion declared clean, while the remainder is scabby: thus making two runs. That is actually the case of Mr. Ingles. There are wild sheep in the bush in his neighbourhood, and there is great difficulty in getting rid of them. His own sheep kept in paddocks are clean, but, apparently, to prevent danger from other neighbours, the run has been subdivided; but it is still under one management. It is supposed to consist of two runs, and upon that the return is made?—If two persons send in one return they are considered to have one run.

1389. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I would point to another case. In Mr. Gibson's property there are included three runs and a public reserve, all returned in one return. The sheep are able to move about from one run to the other. Now, taking these two cases into consideration, I should like your opinion as to the right construction of the Act?—With regard to Gibson's country, is it continuous?

1390. There are three runs and a public reserve held by him, which are all returned as one?—If it is one continuous country, although it may be three runs, you cannot prevent him driving his sheep there.

Hon. Mr. Robinson: I think this is what you mean: Suppose the same kind of change to be made in Gibson's case as is made by Ingles. Here would be three runs, and he would put into them three individuals. Then, at the same time, Gibson, if he became clean, would he be able to get his certificate?

1391. *Hon. the Chairman.*] We want to find out whether you consider that any alteration should be made in this respect, that is, according to the return made by an owner as to the land over which his sheep can travel. We have also had evidence in regard to a run through which goes a road for the purpose of driving. I want to know whether you consider this interpretation that has been put upon the clause is a fair interpretation, or whether it is at all stretched. Do you recognize it as the ordinary interpretation put on the clause?—Yes.

1392. On the other hand, he cuts up his run into different parts, and makes different returns for them: there may be a cluster of runs?—Adjoining?

1393. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] A portion of the same run?—In that case No. I should consider it the same. He has only put up a fence between them, and it is all one.

1394. *Hon. the Chairman.*] At the present moment Mr. Ingles is holding a run which has been, until within a few months, one run—under a certain management—still under the same management. He has divided it into two runs—one clean, the other scabby?—I think it is contrary to the spirit of the Act. If they join, he cannot get a certificate.

Hon. Mr. Williamson: I think the run is under one management.

1395. *Hon. Mr. Robinson:* But supposing them to be one run. Suppose, then, he divides into two, and sells one?—Then he changes the position; there ceases to be a common centre.

1396. Would you give a certificate if he divides?—It is no longer his property, having sold it.

Hon. Mr. Robinson: It is no longer his property, but the sheep are the same, although another person has got it.

1398. *Hon. the Chairman.*] It is according to the return made by the sheepowner. Some persons have two or three different runs, but they make only one return?—You perceive that, when they become the property of different owners, they do not go to the one centre.

1399. Are there any points to which I have omitted to draw your attention, and to which you would like to refer?—No.

1400. Have you any evidence to give with respect to rabbits?—No.

1401. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You are of opinion that the Act as it stands is quite sufficient?—Quite.

1402. I would put such a case as this: it is one just bearing on the question that the Chairman has been asking you: There is a group of runs numbering, we will say, from one to twenty. We will say that number ten happens to be scabby; number eighteen holds a clean certificate

Witness: Are they the property of one person?

1403. *Mr. Buchanan:* No, they are the property of several. Look at this sketch; number ten goes scabby, and loses his certificate. In consequence of that, you declare this an infected district. Number eighteen, holding a clean certificate, can he go to market after dipping twice, although only a fence separates the clean run from the scabby one? The whole of this block, I suppose, is a single station belonging to one man. Now, we will suppose the block is divided into fifty well-fenced paddocks. Scab breaks out in half a dozen flocks, between these and where fattening sheep are kept?—You cannot stop number eighteen from sending his sheep to market if he is clean.

1404. But this man is completely tied up. Do you not think the Act requires some amendment so as to relax in a case of this kind. I may, however, state that this is wholly an imaginary case?—The man cannot take his sheep away if he is on one continuous country. In that case the whole of the sheep are infected according to the Act.

1405. Notwithstanding eight or ten first-class fences?—One man is supposed to bring the whole of his sheep to one centre; when they get into different hands each man has his own shed and his own centre.

1406. I do not wish to elaborate. I wish to put the simple question whether you would not suggest amendments which would give the Chief Inspector discretionary powers, so as to allow such an administration of the Act as would save a person so situated against a loss of several thousand pounds?—I am not sure that I follow you. I think the Act a very good Act, and I do not see the necessity for any alteration.

Mr. T. MACKAY, Jun., examined.

1407. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are in charge of a run in the Wairarapa?—Yes; belonging to the Rev. Mr. Andrew.

1408. There is scab on that run?—We will not admit that there is, but we are without a certificate.

1409. Has it been without a certificate for any length of time?—Ten months.

1410. Have you any idea where scab came from?—It was caused through a general spread of scab throughout the district, which took place last year.

1411. To what do you attribute that general spread of scab?—To the maladministration of the Sheep Act.

1412. Will you point out in what way you think the Act has been maladministered?—I mean, with regard to that outbreak, that it was through the runs not being properly inspected. I believe the infection existed before the Inspectors were aware of it; I also attribute the spread of it to the Crown lands. I think these are the main points. I do not wish to make remarks about any Inspector in the district more than I can help. We have had a case in Court. One of these Inspectors—Mr. Andrews—I had to order off the premises; so that I would rather keep clear of the personal aspects of the case. I take the whole question on the broad grounds that there has been maladministration of the Act. Mr. Bellis is a small owner, with about twelve hundred sheep. This run is in the centre of a large number of other runs. He has been fined for not cleaning. The Inspector's evidence went to show that there had been great neglect. I think that, in a case like that, it was the Inspector's duty to have taken over those sheep, as the Act provided, and to clean them. Instead of that, the man is allowed to go on muddling away, meanwhile jeopardizing the whole community. The Inspector might, if he were any good at all, have taken over these sheep, and cleaned them in a few months. The Inspector's evidence, in my opinion, shows carelessness. The man is fined. What is the result? the man has not his certificate. I believe the sheep are clean at this moment; but he has not a certificate. There has been a great risk run all through the whole affair. There is power in the Act, I think, to take over flocks like that.

1413. You mean under section 33?—Under section 33.

1414. Do you know of any other respect in which the Act has not been carried out?—There have been various things done in the district that I take exception to. I take exception to the way the Inspectors are appointed. I think incompetent men have been appointed—men without any knowledge of their work.

1415. Does that refer to the existing state of things?—Yes, to the existing state of things. I think it can be brought to light that there are men appointed who have no such knowledge of scab as to warrant them holding that position.

1416. To whom do you refer?—I consider that, with regard to scab, Inspector Valance is not competent.

1417. Is there any other?—I believe that, on the whole, the others are competent: Mr. Drummond is one of the most practical men in the department.

1418. Do you know by whom Mr. Valance was appointed?—Not in the slightest. I imagine that he was appointed by Mr. Bayly, on somebody's recommendation. I have seen Drummond pick out scab, but I do not think the Inspectors are so useful as they might be. With regard to Drummond, I think he lacks administrative talent.

1419. Do you mean that he does not lay informations?—No; but there is a great deal of tact required. It wants a man with somewhat large views, and not a man with narrow views, to administer this Act properly.

1420. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] What do you mean by narrow views?—A man of narrow views would perhaps think that sheep are to be cleaned by imposing fines; but there are preventive measures that can be taken against the disease, or there ought to be, under the Act.

1421. How: has it been found that men will not clean their sheep unless they are fined; if so, what do you propose as a remedy?—I have some amendments that I would suggest.

1422. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What would you suggest?—Simultaneous dipping is one thing which I would suggest.

1423. Have you any other?—I can point out another remedy; it is this: I think that in many cases there should be a power under the Act at any moment to allow the Inspector to take scabby sheep and destroy them by paying to the owner a fair compensation. I would point to a case in the Inspector's report for last year. There appears to be 231 scabby sheep in the Auckland County of Marsden. There were some twelve Inspectors in this district, receiving salaries to the amount of £1,700. Now, the salary of one of these men would have bought the whole of these sheep, which might be killed, and so eliminated scab from the district.

1424. You are aware that the district is a very large one, and that travelling about the district is difficult?—The number of sheep in that province is about half a million, while we find two and three millions of sheep in other provinces worked by four, five, or six Inspectors.

1425. There is not half a million?—If there is less that makes the case worse. In those cases which I have mentioned, had there been a clause to destroy scabby flocks for compensation, we would have stamped scab out in the Whareama.

1426. You were referring to the cause of the spread of scab, and you attributed that to two causes: the maladministration of the Act, and the unoccupied lands?—Yes.

1427. These sheep on the unoccupied Crown lands would affect the adjoining runs?—Yes; but it spreads from one to the other. I may point out this fact: that scab in this district now is entirely different from scab some years ago. Formerly we had no rabbits to contend with. Now we have rabbits, and we have Inspectors insisting on employing huge packs of dogs, who have not only hunted the rabbits but also the sheep. That is one of the most pernicious things that has ever been done.

1428. Do you attribute scab to that as another cause?—In my own case scab was found at

lambling time. No sooner had I got notice to clean than I got information that I must put on rabbiters. I had to put on rabbiters. What was the consequence? the spread of scab.

1429. Your Inspectors under the Rabbit Act are the same as under the Sheep Act?—Yes.

1430. What was the state of your flock when you were ordered to put on rabbiters?—I knew that the sheep were infected, and I declared them to be infected. But these rabbiters I object to altogether. As to the Inspectors, they are in the habit of going about with dogs, catching sheep. I do not think there is anything in the Act to give them power to do that. The Act provides that we are to give them every facility for inspection; but I take that to mean that we are to bring our sheep into enclosures or yards, where the Inspectors can look at them. I do not think they should be allowed to go about with dogs, catching people's sheep; they might easily rush one on to a neighbour's ground.

1431. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] You say there is nothing in the Act to give the Inspectors power to catch sheep with dogs?—No; I think not; but they usurp that power. They come with all sorts of dogs, not only sheep-dogs, but with greyhounds—in fact, all sorts of dogs.

1432. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You say they come with greyhounds?—Yes; I suppose they are inspecting rabbits then. There is another point I do not understand. One Inspector at a time might be supposed to come at a time; but we find them hunting in couples.

1433. How many are there in your district?—Three for rabbits and scab combined.

1434. You say that two of them move together?—Yes; very often I have seen three together.

1435. What is the reason for that?—I do not know.

1436. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] With regard to Mr. Valance, did Mr. Drummond not know of his appointment?—I cannot say. I do not consider that Mr. Valance had any knowledge of scab. Our object is to get rid of scab. Three times I have been scabbed by neighbours. I have got rid of it. It is only by continual and expert dipping, and keeping shepherds, that we have been able to keep clean. While we have been inspected, there is little or no inspection in other parts of the district. It is upon broad grounds that I move in this matter. We do not know what may occur. I know that scab is at a low ebb in the district just now. I hope that scab may be soon eradicated, but I think we have no right to be put to the expense of some £10,000.

1437. Do you think that, if the Act is put in force strictly as regards the appointment of Inspectors, scab would be speedily eradicated?—I think it would be so with proper and efficient men; but, if the men appointed to work it are not discreet, it will do a great deal of harm and injury. This is an Act which might be made to ruin any man unless he had a bank behind him. I am afraid there is a tendency to work it in that way, that it will eradicate sheepowners.

1438. Why?—By the way they are going to work: I find they are going about like detectives, trying to trap people.

1439. Is it not their duty to find out scab?—Yes.

1440. And to use every means to find it out?—Yes; by the Act, which says they are to work cordially with the owners. There have been one or two cases in Court which, I think, reach almost to persecution.

1441. Which case do you mean?—In one case, the case of Mr. Cross, the Inspector assisted him to drive through the district. The Magistrate ruled that having assisted to drive did not answer the information. The party has had to appeal.

1442. What is the result?—It has not come forward yet, but there is a feeling throughout the district that the settlers are attempted to be jumped on by this Inspector.

1443. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you not think rather that the settlers are setting their backs up against the Inspectors?—I do not think so; I think the owners, or most of them, will be only too glad to see scab out of the district.

1444. Have you more than one flock on your run?—They will not allow more than one flock.

1445. Is scab confined to a certain portion of your run?—No; it is all over.

1446. Have you tried to sell sheep?—Portions of the run have been let since. Sheep have been worked off in that way.

1447. A lease was given for portions as separate runs?—Yes. They became clean three months after the certificate was given.

1448. Do you know the grounds on which the Inspector allows sheep to travel from an infected district: from the farm being divided into separate runs is it that a portion are clean?—I think the tendency of the Inspectors is not to allow separate flocks. This is a thing we strongly advocate.

1449. We have evidence that in a certain case a gentleman wanted to move his sheep to Wellington, and he was stopped by the Inspector at Ruamahunga. He was stopped on the ground that although he had a clean certificate, yet he did not hold the certificate from the Inspector of the district: do you know anything about that?—I have heard rumours. I would say that this matter of separate flocks was brought prominently under my notice when we became infected. My neighbours were infected. We got the infection from them on one small portion of the run. Mr. Sutton was in charge of the district. The flock that was infected—all of which we were prepared to kill, and did kill nearly all—but some eight or nine miles from us they had a number of fat wethers. They asked to remove these. The whole run was infected. These were separated by nine miles of country, and by about a dozen fairly-good fences. I think that the Act is inconsistent. I think, as I read the Act, that we ought to be allowed to have flocks. The Inspectors are most inconsistent in this respect. I think that a man, if he gets infection on one little corner of his run, should have the right to remove so long as the public will not be injured. Let all precautions such as dipping and so forth be taken, and let him then remove them. I think it would stimulate fencing, and stimulate people to keep their fences in good order, if they were allowed to keep separate flocks.

1450. *Mr. Lance.*] So that, if you put a flock on one side of the run that is clean, the other being infected but belonging to different people—one having a clean certificate, the other being infected, can the person having the clean certificate move?—No.

1451. The Inspector would not allow it. Then, is it possible to remove clean sheep?—Yes, if he does not take them through an infected run.

1452. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Would that come under the head of “travelling sheep”?—Yes; I have travelled sheep myself.

1453. *Mr. Lance.*] Undipped?—Undipped, so long as they do not pass through an infected country.

1454. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are speaking of travelling within one district, not from one district to another?—Yes.

1455. Is there any other point to which you would refer?—I should like to refer to the penalties under the Act. The penalty for failing to clean: there is a minimum penalty and a maximum penalty. I think the Act should be so amended that they should not exceed 1s.; that “threepence” should be eliminated from the Act. There are matters which prevent owners cleaning; it is impossible to know the difficulties they may have to contend with. If they fail to clean they are fined 3d. a head. I cannot think that that is just or right. Many a man may, through a variety of circumstances, be not able to clean his sheep within the specified time. A great deal may depend upon the time his sheep have become infected, at a time when he cannot practically work them. If he gets his flocks infected in April or May there comes lambing season and bad weather. After that, perhaps, comes a wet shearing season. The man is taken to Court. He has done everything that is possible to get his sheep clean. I think it should be left to the Magistrate, upon the evidence given. If a man is careless, fine him—fine him heavily if the circumstances justify it; but there may be circumstances over which he had no control; in that case, he has no business to be fined in that way.

1456. We have heard a great deal about partiality: would that not open the door to a good deal more of that sort of thing?—As to the partiality of the Inspector, I do not like to say much about it myself; but I think what has led, in a great measure, to remarks, is this: that the Inspectors in the district are related to a good number of owners. I think, on broad grounds, that is a mistake. I should be sorry to accuse any one on that account, but, on broad grounds, I think it is a wrong principle that Inspectors should be related to a number of owners in their districts. These people are human, and feel for their friends. I think that Inspectors should be shifted periodically.

1457. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Like policemen?—If you like; like policemen, unless there were some special reason why they should not be removed. I do not wish to accuse these men of partiality, but I know there is that feeling in the district, and it is a very strong feeling too.

1458. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Then, as regards branding: you suggest that it should be a colour?—We do not intend to interfere with the broad-arrow; but the truth is that, in branding with the letter, the letter cannot be kept plain and distinct. Give the sheep a round with the dog, and you cannot say whether it is an “S” or what it is. The colour is the best if it is a distinct colour. Red and blue are largely used by private persons.

1459. Not for stamping: do private persons use red?—Yes. All that is wanted is a distinguishing mark which you cannot mistake.

1460. You know that under the Branding Act there is a registered wool-brand?—Yes.

1461. You would recommend a distinguishing colour?—Yes. I also think that the Act should specify some kind of dip to be used. It is now generally conceded that lime and sulphur is the most efficient curative. I think if any amendment of the Act is made it should be in this direction. People are in the habit of dipping with all sorts of cheap mixtures. These are not reliable. But people use them through ignorance. You have, in this matter, to deal with a great many ignorant in this matter of dip. Many of these dips are rubbish, and worth nothing. If, instead of using these dips, they were obliged to dip with lime and sulphur at a proper strength, their sheep would be cleaned. If they would not dip, then the Inspectors might bring them to Court.

1462. But suppose the Inspector insisted on lime and sulphur and they said they would not dip with that?—He cannot compel them.

1463. How would you deal with a man, in case of imposing a penalty, if he did not dip in accordance with the Act?—I say, let the Act specify the dip. If you are to have forty of one to eighty of the other, and if you are to dip at a certain heat, let the Act specify these particulars. If he does not comply, then let the Inspector lay an information.

1464. It appears to me the Inspector can proceed against a man now if he does not dip to the Inspector's satisfaction?—I have noticed that dipping in bad material is so frequently going on as to make some special provision of this kind necessary.

1465. Then, you think it is necessary to provide for this in the Act, if it should be amended?—Yes. I do not say that lime and sulphur alone should be specified; arsenic is a very good dip; tobacco makes a good dip but for its expense. But some dip should be defined as the only means of eradicating scab.

1466. With regard to fees, what do you say about them?—I think the fines should be applied to the eradication of scab.

1467. Would you apply them to the payment of inspection?—I do not think that would be the best way of appropriating them. I rather think they would be more usefully applied in destroying wild sheep.

1468. In certain districts where scab is, such as Auckland and Wairarapa, they pay considerably less than the cost of inspection, whereas a clean district, such as Hawke's Bay, pays considerably more; so that when you say these fines should be applied to a certain purpose, do you think it would be right to appropriate them in that way?—I think that the fines taken from a man ought to be applied to help him and those in his district.

1469. As regards the certificate, I read in these recommendations from the district that there is no power to compel the Inspector to grant a clean certificate when sheep are clean. Do you know of any case in which it has been withheld?—I think there are cases in the district where the certificates

have been withheld for little or no cause. I know one or two cases where the reason given for withholding it was that the owner was not fenced against Crown land.

1470. Because there are scabby sheep there?—I believe so. The Act does not say that you are to have a fence. You are to keep your sheep and to have shepherds. It appears to me to look like persecution if a man gets scab and then gets clean again that his certificate is refused.

1471. You say that after the expiration of the nine months, if the Inspector finds no scab, there should be power in the Act to compel him to give a certificate?—It is a serious thing to have a certificate withheld: you are liable if one of these sheep gets away.

1472. You mean that your neighbours could come on you for damages?—With a disagreeable neighbour there is no knowing where the damages would end.

1473. Then, there is the travelling of infected sheep?—There is nothing in the Act by which the Inspector can actually stop infected sheep from travelling. There is a provision that a man travelling sheep can be fined for every run he goes through. But that does not stop him taking infected sheep about the country. In some instances it might pay a man to drive infected sheep in this way. A case came under my own notice in respect to lice in sheep from Napier. Mr. Drummond detected lice in them. They were allowed to travel through the district. They were taken on the run of the person.

1474. Do you mean that they were scabby?—Yes; it was brought under my notice through them being infected with lice. There was no power in the Inspector to destroy them. I think there should be. I am afraid that, in spite of precautions that are supposed to be taken, in driving through the country infection is caught. I have been told of a case in the district where the sheep came from the northern portion of the district. They were infected coming through infected runs. Previous to that, there was the case of Mr. Elder, where, the Inspector being with the sheep, they were infected and driven to Wairarapa.

1475. How is it they were not stopped?—The Inspector was there.

1476. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Who was the Inspector?—I think it was Inspector Smith.

1477. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You say that, under the 45th section, any person driving infected sheep should be fined; not stopped?—There is no provision for stopping. There is only provision for a penalty; there is nothing to prevent this man doing a great deal of damage. There should be power to detain him or take the sheep over.

1478. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] If he infects other runs he is liable?—Yes; but the mischief is done.

1479. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Probably he is not in a position to pay damages on recovery?—There is no use locking the stable-door after the horse is gone. The thing is to have in the Act what will prevent them doing mischief. I think this Act fails in the fact that there is not enough legislative provision in this respect.

1480. With regard to the 46th section?—The words "shall" and "may" the Inspector reads them as one. I think their meaning should be clearly defined. Many people say that "may" means "shall." [Clause read by the Chairman.]

1481. We ask for the word "reasonable" to be substituted for "sufficient," for there has been a case where the Inspector insisted on a man being put to 10s. expense for every sheep, which was tantamount to a refusal.

1482. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Was not that hearsay?—I was assured that it happened in a case in Marlborough. I think there is not a proper system of inspection throughout the subdivision. I believe there are places in the Wairarapa which have not been inspected for years.

1483. *Mr. Dodson.*] They still hold clean certificates?—Yes; but sheep in many flocks are in a terrible state with lice. Sheep have been brought in from infected flocks that were very bad. It is very hard to say what condition sheep might be in various parts of the district.

1484. *Hon. the Chairman.*] How long does a clean certificate last?—Until it is cancelled.

1485. It is not renewable?—I think not.

1486. Suppose it was necessary, some definite period would be required within which the Inspector would have to examine the sheep before renewing?—I think there should be stringent and regular inspection.

1487. It might be confined to infected districts?—Yes; in infected districts. There is no use in harassing people more than is necessary. I think that with regard to lice in sheep some step should be taken: there are flocks in Wairarapa in a disgraceful state.

1488. You say that lice are prevalent?—The state of lice in sheep is getting prevalent. There is something very peculiar in the fact that the Act is not being worked in this particular. Under Mr. Sutton it was commenced. One or two gentlemen lost their clean certificates. It stopped suddenly, and the whole thing was got rid of.

1489. Lice can be got rid of: it is not a more serious state than that of scab?—I think it would be a good thing to require owners to dip once a year.

1490. Is it necessary to dip for lice?—I think it would be a good thing to dip: the most intelligent men dip their sheep at least once a year: that, I think, would be sufficient.

1491. Cannot he be compelled to dip for lice?—I think, if the Act is worked strictly, it must be worked in the same way for lice as for scab. But I would not advocate that: it would be a serious thing for the owner of sheep otherwise clean: it would shut up most of the clean fat sheep. You would have not only the producers but the consumers up in arms at once.

1492. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Do you think that sheep will generate lice without contagion?—It is a doubtful point: I have not studied it. I would not like to say that they generate spontaneously. We want Tyndall, or some such man, to discuss the subject. I have an opinion that some of these lower farms of life do generate spontaneously in that way, but I would not like to assert the fact.

1493. *Captain Russell.*] If I understood you rightly, you said you advocated one dipping for lice?—Yes.

1494. Would you insist on lime and sulphur?—No; many of the patent dips would be sufficient for that.

1495. Have you used any of those dips?—I have used glycerine as an experiment, some time ago. I was well satisfied with it. In one instance that we used it there was a sheep that was very bad: it effected a perfect cure.

1496. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] What was the dip?—Glycerine. After some time we examined three sheep which were dipped and were not cured: we dipped the whole of them again.

1497. Were you satisfied then?—I was satisfied on account of the wool.

1498. *Captain Russell.*] Have you known lime and sulphur to cure in one dipping?—I have known it. I am opposed to patent dips for another reason. You never know how soon you may get from those who sell it spurious stuff, which may fail of having any virtue in it whatever. Lime and sulphur is admitted to be a cure upon which you may rely; arsenic is also a very good dip.

1499. Do you think the arsenical dips are preferable to the carbolic-acid dips?—Carbolic is one of the best dips there is, but it is dangerous to use it so as to have any great effect. As for the other compositions I do not wish to express any opinion.

1500. Would you make it arbitrary, the power you would give to the Inspector?—I think it is sometimes necessary the Inspector should have large powers, provided he is an intelligent man.

1501. Is it possible for you to be always wise in your selection of a person to fill the office of Inspector?—I believe it is a mistake to leave the appointment of Inspectors in the hands of men in the Government Buildings. Men so appointed may or may not be practical men. I think there should be some sort of examination before a man who wished to become an Inspector should be appointed. I am myself strongly in favour of this Act being worked more or less locally; that is by Boards representing large areas, the Board to be elected by the ratepayers. I would let the Government have a voice in it by appointing one or two members. I think such an authority would work the Sheep Act. It would be a Board of advice for the Inspectors and the head of the department.

1502. Has scab always been in your district?—Yes; but it was very low under the Provincial Act: at one time almost as low as it is now. Under that Act we had a right to flock. I never saw any bad results from it.

1503. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You mean separate flocks?—Yes; separate flocks.

1504. *Captain Russell.*] Will you give me concisely the cases in which you wish a good deal of discretion to be left to the Inspector. You have said in your evidence that you thought it absurd that different flocks should not be treated separately?—I qualified the statement by saying "under proper precautions." I should say that, in every separate part of the run which he desires to form into a separate subdivision of his flock or run, there should be a dipping apparatus. We want to get away our sheep, hedged round, however, with proper precautions.

1505. Is it not necessary on a run to shift your sheep from paddock to paddock: through that, would not a great source of danger arise?—I do not think so. I do not think that in all cases it is necessary. You might divide your flock or run into many divisions.

1506. Have you two classes of country?—We keep crossbreds and longwools on one part, we keep merinos on another. The working is different for each. There is nothing to prevent us drafting.

1507. But, practically, when you come to draft, you find the merinos among the longwools?—Yes; but we make up the matter in this way: by giving the right to separate flocks, you stimulate owners to keep their fences in good order so as to obviate that. If I were to have two separate flocks, one clean and the other not so, if I allowed any mixture, I would lose my certificate for the clean.

1508. *Mr. Buchanan.*] That is, when you were detected?—Yes.

1509. Do you not think that if you have separate flocks you ought to have separate yards and separate woolsheds?—I do not say as to woolsheds. I do not see a necessity for separate sheds. It would be a good thing to have separate dips and separate yards.

1510. *Mr. Walker.*] Will you turn to clause 33 of the Act. With reference to the power there given, I understood you to say that a reasonable power should be given to the Inspector. What do you say to the exercise of the powers given in this section?—I think, in regard to clause 33, good would have resulted if he exercised those powers.

1511. Did you ever know a case where that power has been exercised?—No; I do not know a case where it has been exercised.

1512. But supposing the Crown lands surrounding, and you fenced, but the adjoining owners did not, would it not rather complicate the state of things for the Inspector to take possession?—It would in some cases; but it would be a very difficult matter for the Inspector to do. There is a case mentioned where there were a thousand sheep, on an easily-mustered run, endangering a number of owners.

1513. Would not that section give power to stipulate the kind of dip to be used: could not the Inspector, under that clause, tell a man that if he did not use lime and sulphur he would take possession?—No doubt the Inspector could take that course; but if he came to me and told me so I would laugh at him. He could take that course, but he would not take it in hand. I do not think that large owners of flocks are likely to run any risk. If inspection failed, if scab broke out, there would be a difficulty. If the whole thing could be stamped out at once, this is the case where the fit man should be brought in. I have been told of cases in Australia where small lots became infected. They were at once destroyed. It is like fire, if it once gets a head, all the water you can get will not do any good. It is the same with scab. In New South Wales, when scab appeared, they destroyed the flock in which it appeared. The great thing would be to destroy the whole lot, paying reasonable compensation.

Mr. Dodson: That was in New South Wales. They destroyed the sheep, but they did not pay compensation.

1514. *Mr. Walker.*] I think you said that settlers were in favour of a stringent administration of the Act?—Yes, the majority; with discretion.

1515. You said the majority: I want to know whether there is a minority that is not in favour of it?—There may be a few careless men.

1516. Is there any public opinion in favour of careless administration?—I am not aware of it.

1517. Do you not think that scab has continued in the district because public opinion is not strong enough to keep it down?—I think there has been something of the kind; but I think there is a feeling now that scab and the rabbit-pest should be got under if possible.

1518. Is there no under feeling that would make the Inspectors careless?—No, I think not; there is no sympathy for those who would keep up scab. I know that in the case of Mr. Valance, which has been mentioned, several of the adjoining owners were interested. I am not sure that Mr. Maunsell did not direct that this clause should be put in force.

1519. Do you attribute scab to some certain centre of infection?—Yes; I think to a great extent that is so.

1520. And that these centres have always been distributing scab?—Yes; there are some that have had scab for many years, and have been considered the source of infection in the district. I think that before this last great outbreak there were several cases where this 33rd clause might have been enforced with good effect.

1521. *Mr. Lance.*] Did you ever know a case of the Inspector taking charge of a flock?—No; not in my experience.

1522. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You say that in your own case you would have got cleaned had it not been for your neighbours?—I said that I got the scab from my neighbours.

1523. Looking over the returns, I find in the Wairarapa, in 1879, second quarter, so many flocks declared scabby; third quarter, 1880, fourth quarter, 1881, second quarter, 1882, and third quarter of 1883, so many

1524. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What county is that in?—Wairarapa East.

1525. Do you attribute any damage to your sheep from these flocks?—I was infected on one occasion shortly after coming from that direction.

1526. When was that?—It is about nine years ago.

1527. Do you deprecate severe fining?—I do, to a certain extent.

1528. Was this continuing state of scab brought about by severe fining?—I do not think there were any severe fines imposed at that time. There was one, I believe, of £75 and another of £10.

1529. To what do you attribute the long continuance of scab?—That the owners do not take the proper steps to clean. If they took the proper steps to muster their flocks, they would soon have cleaned them.

1530. You cited a case—that of Mr. Bellis—in which you complained of the setting aside the clause under which the Inspector could have taken charge you say: was the Act carried out in other respects?—Yes; I think so.

1531. Then, you have no complaint with regard to this flock except that it should have been taken charge of by the Inspector?—I believe he (Bellis) had no dip when the scab broke out; the Act gives a month to get dipping materials. If he had a dip at the time, his sheep would not have got so bad.

1532. Was that the fault of the Act, or the administration of the Act?—I do not know whether there was action taken in that particular case.

1533. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You say that Mr. Drummond has not administrative talent: have you any specific cases to cite?—I do not know of any specific case. I have that impression. From a pretty long knowledge of him, I think he lacks tact. I think he is too plain; that he knows he has powers, and that he annoys people.

1534. I wish to put to you another question on that point: do you assert that Mr. Drummond, as a Sheep Inspector, is an unpopular man in the district?—I believe that at this time he is unpopular in the district.

1535. In the district?—Yes; I am sorry to say that I believe so.

1536. Do you know whether, under his rule, South Wairarapa has been made clean?—I think it was clean under his rule.

1537. That it became clean under his rule?—Yes.

1538. Do you know whether, under his supervision, the number of owners of scabby sheep has diminished rapidly during the last six or twelve months?—I am of opinion that there is less scab in the district, but I would not like to assert that it is clean.

1539. You mentioned it as desirable that an Inspector being appointed to a district should not have relations in that district?—Yes.

1540. Can you give us any cases where flocks of scabby sheep are owned by people related to the Inspector?—I do not know that I can at present, but there have been cases. Mr. Cameron's flock was infected while Mr. Drummond was Inspector.

1541. Is that the only case you cite?—There have been several other cases, but I do not know the names.

1542. Have the flocks you refer to been scabby of late years?—I cannot say.

1543. My reason for putting these questions is lest the Committee might think you had actual cases to point to before you made this statement as to relationship existing between the Inspector and the owners of flocks?—That is an interpretation which you are putting on my statement. But I do not think I intended to complain of any particular person. I said that it was undesirable, on broad grounds, that the Inspector should have relations in the district. That was the line I took.

1544. Are you aware of the recommendations made by a committee of sheepowners in Masterton: was there anything said as to the appointment of an Inspector?—I think the recommendation of that committee was that Mr. Drummond should be appointed for a special purpose. I think I myself was in favour of the resolution asking that he should be appointed.

1545. Yet you have told the Committee that he has administered the Sheep Act contrary to the regulation which enjoins that he should cultivate good relations with the sheepowners?—The public opinion of the district at the present time is that he is not popular.

1546. Would you apply that to the greater part of the district or only to a small section of it?—I would apply it certainly to the Castlepoint portion. I do not know the feeling of the settlers around Masterton.

1547. You are in favour of certificates lapsing unless renewed periodically?—No; I did not say they should lapse altogether. That would perhaps be going too far. I said there should be a systematic round of inspection, and that the certificate should be renewed unless some exceptional outbreak of scab took place.

1548. Do you not recognize on the part of the Inspector his liability to be called on to visit particular flocks, or important cases in connection with the freezing ships, your answer seems somewhat inconsistent?—All I wished to say was that every precaution should be taken to see that there was no spread of scab, and that there should be a systematic round of inspection.

1549. Are you aware of the concealment of scab on the runs?—Yes.

1550. Did I not understand you to say that you deprecated the Inspector riding about the land: would that be necessary to detect scab?—If he thinks I am concealing scab he should compel me to muster.

1551. Then again you object to dogs?—I have found that they rush sheep through fences; that sheep will go through fences away from them; and the sheep go where you do not want them to go—across fences, creeks, rivers, &c.

1552. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I want to ask you with regard to the sheep in unoccupied country. You attribute one of the causes of scab to that. Can you say whether you think it possible to eradicate scab there?—I think so. I think if it could not be finally eradicated it could be checked. It is a matter that wants approaching very carefully by a competent man. I have had a considerable amount of experience with bush sheep, and have done a good deal with hunting bush sheep. In such a district the greatest care would be necessary, so that they did not hunt these wild sheep into the settlers' flocks. That is the first thing to guard against. The only way to guard against that, that I know of, is to keep a number of men on the boundary while the hunting is going on. The fencing should be kept in as good order as possible. There is another thing worth noticing. You would want competent men to do this particular kind of work. The Government might be asked to assist. The men to be employed should be men not only competent on account of their knowledge of sheep, but men prepared to rough it. It would be a rough job. They would have to camp out, and all that. My experience is this: that after wet weather these sheep come out into the more accessible approaches to dry themselves. Their fleeces are so heavy that they cannot run, and you could catch them without much difficulty.

1553. What would you do with them?—Kill them. I should be prepared to give a bonus of so much a head for them. I would not have men with dogs of all kinds. I would have them with a few good sheep-dogs. I do not think the men we have as Inspectors are very competent to do this kind of work. They have not the experience necessary. They are too used to horseback work.

1554. Would it be a safe plan to call for tenders to kill them?—If you do that you will have to go at haphazard. It would, I think, be more convenient to pay men a small salary with bonus. If you do not take some steps of this kind it will take a long time to be rid of these sheep. Of course you would make these men produce the skin and ears.

1555. How long do you think you might take to get rid of them in the way you suggest?—I think that six months of the summer, with six proper men, would be sufficient; but I have not been over this country myself.

1556. Do you not think that winter would be the best time?—No, I cannot say that it would; because it is characteristic of wild sheep to go farther into the bush, and besides you would lose so much time in winter; the days are short: in summer you would have a long day; it would be better to take it in the summer. You might perhaps start after the autumn shearing.

WEDNESDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. EDWIN MEREDITH, Landaff, examined.

1557. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are a runholder in the Wairarapa?—Yes.

1558. Is your run infected?—No.

1559. Has it been so lately?—I received a certificate in February last.

1560. Had it been long infected before?—No; a single sheep was found diseased, upon which I gave immediate notice. As the sheep were dipped immediately, in a few days, or in perhaps less time, the infection was thoroughly eradicated.

1561. The Committee are anxious to get information as to the working of the Act in your district; perhaps you would state to the Committee whether you think it works satisfactorily?—I do not think it works satisfactorily at all. I have not come here on account of any special grievance, but to call in question the administration of the Act in my neighbourhood. I received private information that my family were to be persecuted. I have taken note of all transactions within the last twelve months which I think have led up to what I was warned would come about.

Hon. the Chairman. The Committee is here simply to get information as to the working of the Act.

Hon. Mr. Robinson. To find out whether it has been fairly administered: whether pressure has been brought to bear upon one, and favour shown to another. There has been evidence given which points to persons having been differently treated.

1562. *Hon. the Chairman.*] We should like to know whether the Act is put in force impartially.

or otherwise: I consider that you can tell us the cases without mentioning that there was "persecution"?—I am not going to say anything except what can be substantiated. I complain that the 29th section of the Act has been abused in my case.

1563. Will you mention the cases in which you say that the Act has not been properly worked?—Shortly after my flock was examined by Mr. Drummond, at the instance of my son, who did not believe there was any infection, the result was that four out of five flocks were found to be free from disease. In the case of the fifth flock, to which notice of infection referred, a single sheep was detected to be diseased. Later on I applied to remove a flock of fat sheep. I did so by letter, and the letter was referred to the department. Later on I got permission to sell. Later on I applied to sell the second flock, also by letter. That letter was also referred to the head of the department. In this case it was refused. Therefore the action of the department was inconsistent. I applied, under section 29, that I might be allowed to remove. They gave me this document. This is what I wish to draw your attention to. I have told you that the whole of my flock was clean; that only one of them had been infected; that within a few days all chance of disease was eradicated; yet my neighbour is allowed to sell his sheep, all his flock being infected except one. I do not complain that his application was granted, and that he was allowed to sell, but I do complain that this section of the Act is variously administered. That is one case. I shall give you another.

1564. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Give us the names of the Inspectors?—In one case it was Mr. Sutton, who referred to the department my application to remove. Subsequently Mr. John Drummond was appointed. Mr. Drummond refused permission after referring to the head of the department.

1565. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Were both of these Inspectors supposed to have instructions from the department?—I assume that.

1566. Do you know of no reason why that second application for selling sheep should have been refused?—None whatever. I challenge any.

1567. Were you going to drive them through infected country?—No.

1568. Was there any reason assigned?—I can give you the reason assigned to me. I applied at the office of the Inspector at Masterton personally, believing that Mr. Orbell was in charge of the department. I asked whether the flock of sheep referred to there—six hundred fat wethers—required to be branded with the letter S. My manager received instructions to brand with the letter S, but he had not complied. I applied to Mr. Orbell personally whether he required these fat sheep to be branded with the letter S. He said "Yes," adding, "Mr. Drummond is in charge of your district." I asked Mr. Drummond whether he required me to brand, as I was going to sell. "Under the circumstances," he said, "if I was going to shear, and wanted to sell, that the S brand should be put on some part that would distinguish the sheep." He said, then, "I will see them dipped and give you a pass for them." Later on I told him that I was about to make a sale. He said, "You cannot sell," I said, "You have changed your mind." Drummond replied, "Mr. Orbell says if I allow you to bring them to the boundary of his subdivision, he will stop them." Now I must explain. They did not have to go through infected flocks, but simply to the railway-station, where they would be at once trucked away. The distance through Mr. Orbell's subdivision to the railway-station was a mile, fenced on both sides, so that the objection made by Mr. Orbell must have been a factious one.

1549. You mentioned the names of two Inspectors: Will you state to the Committee whether there is a Chief Inspector in your district, with Sub-Inspectors?—There is one recognized as head of the department. Mr. Sutton was recognized as the principal Inspector. Subsequently he was removed, and Mr. Drummond is now recognized as the head of the subdistrict.

1570. Does Mr. Drummond give instructions to Sub-Inspectors in charge of subdivisions?—Decidedly. After the explanation from Drummond, that if he gave me permission I should be stopped by Orbell, I wrote the letter, which you will find before you, requesting permission to sell. After three weeks I got a reply, to the effect that he had referred my application to the department, and he declined to take any action. [Letter laid on the table.] I would like to remark that, in submitting the letter of the 3rd August to Mr. Sutton, I requested that it should be submitted to Mr. Drummond, who was the person that inspected the sheep.

1571. You were not holding a clean certificate at that time?—It had just been forfeited, within ten or twenty days.

1572. You spoke of five flocks: how were they separated?—They were separated by thoroughly sheep-proof fences. They were separated by three fences, one of which was a rabbit-proof fence, and the creek. One of these paddocks was used for cattle. The first were sent from No. 3.

1573. Do you not think that the reason was that they were adjoining infection?—I do not think so, because Mr. Drummond must be aware that it is impossible to get stock across this river. You must be made aware that there is a little piece of the river unfenced. It is deep water except in one place, and the bottom is mud, so that it is impossible for sheep and difficult for a man to get over. The flock in which infection was found was removed to an inner paddock (the Peninsula) immediately after being dipped, and were consequently separated from No. 4 flock by a seven-wire fence, as well as the creek referred to.

1574. Then, you have reason to think that was an instance of want of impartiality?—By way of contrast to that, I will put the case of my neighbour. My adjoining neighbour, having a number of flocks all infected with the exception of one, no impediment is made to his selling his sheep, I presume under the 29th section.

1575. Were they sold in the same market?—Mine were to go to Wellington for slaughtering. My neighbour's sheep were sold for fattening purposes. I bought some myself. They were sold on the run, I assume under clause 29, under inspection; they were allowed to dip and be removed.

1576. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] They were sold as stores?—Yes.

1577. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Is that run cut up like yours, so as to have separate flocks?—Yes; I think so.

1578. Who was the Inspector?—Mr. Drummond.

1579. Do you know of any other instances?—Another case that I complain of is that of my son, Richard, whose sheep have not been infected sheep. After taking the precaution to have his sheep dipped in Hawke's Bay, he is not allowed to have a certificate. He has been obstructed on the road in driving his sheep under the certificate which he brought from Hawke's Bay.

1580. Can you say what was the reason for that?—I can give no reason for it. I look on it as deliberate persecution.

1581. Who was the Inspector?—Mr. Orbell; and he stopped him on the same ground as he would have stopped me.

1582. I do not quite understand?—I stated Mr. Drummond told me that Mr. Orbell informed Mr. Drummond that if he gave me permission to remove six hundred fat wethers, when they reached the Ruamahunga Bridge, and came into Mr. Orbell's district, he would stop them.

1583. Did he assign a reason why he would stop them?—Mr. Drummond did not tell me.

1584. Are there any other cases?—Yes; my son, Edwin, was subjected to prosecution in the Resident Magistrate's Court for not making his sheep scabby in the eyes of the law; or, in other words, for refusing to brand sheep with S, for which sheep he held a clean certificate.

1585. If he held a clean certificate, how could the Inspector call upon him to brand his sheep as if they were scabby?—I cannot tell why, but the information was not upheld.

1586. To what do you attribute the existence of scab in your district?—Do you allude to open runs?

1587. Generally?—I should say that the chief reason that scab exists in the open country is because of the manner of administering the Act?—The 23rd section of the Act is not sufficiently attended to.

1588. How do you mean?—The Inspectors do not put themselves in communication with persons whose certificates may have been recently cancelled and induce them to take steps for the eradication of the disease in its early stages. Another and more potent reason is the way in which section 29 is abused; so that where people have sheep in separate flocks they are not allowed to sell, and so lessen the number of sheep liable to disease, and facilitate the means of cleaning the balance. Owners cannot have the means to fence so long as they are debarred selling their sheep.

1589. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] How many sheep have you in a flock?—The largest number I have in a flock is two thousand.

1590. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Those that you have just mentioned are the causes to which you attribute the existence of scab on those runs?—Yes.

1591. Then, your evidence amounts to this: that these clauses have not been properly put into force?—I think so.

1592. Do you think the fault is in the terms of the clauses themselves that they are not put into force?—I think the 29th and the 32nd sections do conflict. I can read them without difficulty, but I am satisfied that the Inspectors stumble over them.

1593. The 29th is the one that refers to separate flocks; the 32nd to the clean certificate?—Some Inspectors, in reading the 32nd clause, read it as if it superseded the 29th.

1594. Have the Inspectors in your district laid many informations against runholders?—No doubt they have laid a good many. It is a large district.

1595. Have the Inspectors carried out the Act—setting aside what you mentioned in regard to partiality—satisfactorily in other respects?—Beyond that there is a great deal of favouritism shown.

1596. Do they enforce the Act outside the cases which you have mentioned?—I suppose so; except for the favouritism.

1597. Then, you say that in working the Act great partiality has been shown?—Yes.

1598. Do you think the Act is better administered in its present form, under the colonial department, or have you any suggestion to make?—Yes; I would repeat a suggestion made by a deputation to Sir John Hall on the subject. I think the Act, being administered by the Colonial Secretary, militates very much against its being carried out in its integrity and in being carried out successfully.

1599. What do you suggest instead?—That there should be a Chief Inspector, who should have control of the working of the Act. He should be selected for his thorough practical knowledge of the subject he has to deal with. He should be a man whose character is above suspicion.

1600. He would be under some authority?—He would be responsible, no doubt, to a higher authority—Parliament; but he would have complete control. He would probably adopt the same system which they have adopted in Australia. There is a head officer—Mr. Kerr for Victoria, Mr. Bruce for New South Wales, the late Mr. White for Tasmania. I believe all these gentlemen have got rid of the disease in their respective districts without undue hardship to any one.

1601. In what way are they appointed?—Directly by Parliament, I think.

1602. Are they independent?—They are independent of any political influence and responsible to Parliament alone—responsible, I think, to Parliament.

1603. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Suppose that one of these flocks—you say in number about two thousand—were to be diseased, how long would it take to cure?—In my case it would be cured in a week.

1604. There is no difficulty in curing scab in sheep?—That depends on the country in which they run.

1605. What has the country in which they run to do with it?—It has everything to do with it. In a rough broken country it is very difficult to muster.

1606. You do not understand me. Of course, if you cannot get the sheep in, you cannot cure them; but, given two thousand sheep, no matter where, can you cure them?—Yes; so long as they are yarded, and not mixed with scabby sheep. It is very easy to clean. There is no difficulty in curing scab; none whatever to a practical man.

1607. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What do you use for cleaning sheep?—I think the only thoroughly reliable dip known is lime and sulphur.
1608. That is your opinion?—Yes; that is my opinion.
1609. Would you consider any of these patent dips a guarantee against scab?—If there was disease.
1610. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Suppose the disease were in an incipient state, as those were of which you speak?—I would not rely on anything but lime and sulphur.
1611. Certainly not on patent dips?—Certainly not; but I would use Little's or carbolic acid, in preference, to travel with.
1612. *Hon. the Chairman.*] In preference to lime and sulphur: why: would it be to prevent their contracting disease?—It is easier to wash out lime and sulphur than carbolic acid, which lasts for some time, if the wool is permitted to dry before being immersed in water (*i.e.*, a river).
1613. Is yours a very scabby district?—My property lies to the south of the Whareama River. I do not think there is any scab south of that river.
1614. Then, your opinion is that the Inspector ought to have no discretionary power in administering the Sheep Act?—I think he should.
1615. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] But you said he showed favouritism?—Yes.
1616. If a man has no discretionary power he cannot show favour?—Some of the sections are so impracticable and undesirable that if the Inspector were to put them in force he would ruin people, but he would not clean scab.
1617. The discretionary power it is which allows him to show favouritism: that is your complaint?—I cannot quite follow you.
1618. The Inspector could not show favour if an Act took away his discretionary power. He must then administer the Act. If he has discretionary power, he may make you dip twice, one once, and that gentleman opposite three times. If the Act were so drawn that the Inspector has no power?—By discretion I mean that he would not put into force an impracticable section of the Act, such as I have referred to. I said that it was impossible to herd sheep in some cases, and in such like cases an Inspector should have and use discretion.
1619. You say that he does not treat you as he does your neighbours: that he has used his discretion, and you complain of that?—When I say discretion, I mean that he would not attempt to put into force those sections of the Act that would be prejudicial to good effect being given to it.
1620. *Captain Russell.*] When you use the word "favouritism," do you use it in its corrupt sense?—Yes, I do.
1621. You speak of the patent dips, and think them unreliable: have you had any practical experience of many of these dips?—No; I have not had any practical experience recently, but some years ago I had some faith, and I tried Cooper's dip. But I have found them unreliable. My reason for giving this positive answer is that I know sheep subjected to Little's dip for lice in Hawke's Bay are found to be infected with lice notwithstanding.
1622. Do you not think the cause of failure is because of want of care in using them?—Not in this case. It was my son who bought sheep in Hawke's Bay. He made it a condition with settlers before giving delivery to have them dipped. He said that he saw the sheep, in one case in particular, thoroughly well dipped. On one of these sheep after ten days travelling lice were found.
1623. Is there not a difference between patent dips as great as the difference between Little's and lime and sulphur: Cooper's is a poisonous dip, and Little's is not?—I do not wish to be dogmatic; I merely wished to express an opinion.
1624. On what do you base your opinion?—Merely on hearsay: I have no practical experience.
1625. When that scabby sheep was dipped, or, say, previously to the finding of that scabby sheep which you mention, how long before since you had been clean: had you been cleaned for five years?—No; I think less than a year.
1626. Did you dip all your sheep, or only one flock?—Only one flock.
1627. Did you get a clean certificate with the one dipping?—No; I did not. As all my neighbours dipped at shearing, I also dipped my sheep off the shears (not till then); but my sheep were clean.
1628. You attribute favouritism to the Inspector?—I am referring to only one Inspector.
1629. Do the Inspectors go over the whole of each district, or has each a part to himself?—I believe the whole is under one Inspector, and under his direction.
1630. *Hon. the Chairman.*] With regard to stopping the sheep at the Ruamahunga bridge, did Mr. Orbell assign any reason for stopping the sheep?—My son will be able to tell you more about that.
1631. Will you be good enough to repeat the reason which Mr. Drummond stated why he would not give you a certificate under clause 29?—He said that, if he gave me a pass, Mr. Orbell would stop them when they got to his district.
1632. He assigned no other reason?—No.
1633. He did not assign the reason why Orbell should stop them?—No.
1634. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] Was this outside?—It was outside, near the boundary.
1635. Have the districts been altered since then?—Yes; that is, the boundary of the subdivision; not the district.
1636. Was Orbell's subdivision at that time a clean subdivision?—Yes; I believe it was.
1637. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Is there any rule with regard to removing sheep from one subdivision to another: is it necessary that, in coming from a clean to an infected subdivision, they should be dipped?—Not that I am aware of.
1638. Is the subdivision treated in the same way as the district is treated?—I think so.
1639. Then, in the case of districts, if you want to move sheep from one district to another, you have to dip: what I want to know is whether subdivisions are treated in the same way?—If you mean that they are subject to dip, or any particular restrictions, they are not.

1640. Then, on what ground do you suppose that Mr. Orbell could stop your sheep going from the place you stated to the railway, seeing that they were not going out of a district, but from one subdivision to another?—Mr. Orbell never stated his reason to me. The only reason I got from Mr. Drummond was that it was purely a matter of restriction, that would be enforced in my case. The Committee might elicit from my son, who was stopped by Mr. Orbell, what reason was assigned in his case.

1641. Did you call on him to give his reasons?—No; I applied to Mr. Drummond.

1642. Should you not have called upon him to give a reason why he would have stopped the sheep: what became of the sheep?—In my case they remained on my run.

1643. *Hon. Mr. Robison.*] What did your son do with his?—He took them on to the sale-yards and sold them.

1644. Then, Mr. Orbell did not stop him?—He attempted to stop him.

1645. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] I would ask whether this Inspector is the one who has charge of the district, and, if so, whether he allowed other flocks to come into the district in the same way?—I never knew any other except my son's sheep obstructed in the same way.

1646. Do you know of other flocks going into the district?—Yes, a number of them.

1647. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Your run was in the district?—Under Mr. Drummond.

1648. He refused to give you leave because Orbell would not allow them to pass into his district: had he (Drummond) given you permission to move them, do you think he would have stopped them?—I would then have tested the question with him. I would have thrown the onus on Mr. Orbell.

1649. Did it not fall within Mr. Drummond's duty to decide whether or not you should get permission?—He was responsible. I produce the letter.

1650. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Did Mr. Drummond give any reason for wishing to stop your sheep, such as the failure of dip, or anything of that sort?—He assigned no reason beyond this which I have just given—that, if he gave the required pass, Mr. Orbell would stop them as they came to the boundary. This was *viva voce*, and it was therefore I wrote to him.

1651. Are you in a position to state to the Committee, from anything that Drummond said to you, that he had no other reasons?—None other possible.

1652. That was the only reason?—That was the only reason. [Letter read: "I am not prepared to grant permission," &c.]

1653. *Mr. Walker.*] In case of moving into Orbell's district, it would be like taking from an infected district into a clean district?—

1654. *Hon. the Chairman.*] This was from subdivision to subdivision?—It is all one district.

1655. *Mr. Walker.*] The sheep had never been dipped?—They had never been dipped, dressed, or anything done to them.

1656. Then, there was no reason within the Act why they should not have been moved?—No.

1657. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Is there anything further that you would like to state?—You asked me some questions as to whether I could suggest any alterations in the Act. I would recommend that a previous recommendation made to the Government should be adhered to—that was, in effect, to have a Chief Inspector, who should have complete control; then I would recommend that all Sub-Inspectors should be chosen for their known practical efficiency, and not on account of favouritism: the department should be careful not to appoint a number of men who have relations in the district, over which they will have control. That has been one of the most fertile sources of the partiality I complain of.

1658. That amounts to this: that the Government should be careful that the best men should be appointed, and that they should enforce the Act strictly?—Yes; but there are certain circumstances under which the Act cannot be enforced. You might ruin people, and rather spread scab than clean it by attempting to do so. I refer specially to enforce herding on broken and scrubby country.

THURSDAY, 25TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. R. MEREDITH, examined.

1659. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Tell the Committee where you live?—I live in East Wairarapa.

1660. What is the name of your run?—Beaumaris.

1661. Your father gave you that?—He is on Kohiwai. Riversdale Run was divided by my father into three: Waiorongā belonging to my brother; Beaumaris belonging to myself; and then he subsequently leased a portion of the other—that is, Riversdale—to my brother Edwin. He keeps Kohiwai himself. I have brought a map with me showing how it is divided, and showing every fence on the run.

1662. What the Committee would be glad to hear is as to the working of the Sheep Act in your district. Of course, in explaining how that is worked, if you have any special case to refer to, the Committee would be glad to hear it shortly. We want to avoid as much as possible questions of grievances. If you can state shortly what are your experiences of the working of the Act we shall be glad?—It will be necessary for me to cite cases. I can cite my own case. I have the letters here and all the correspondence with reference to it.

1663. Which run are you speaking of?—Beaumaris.

1664. Have you scab on that run?—No.

1665. Have you had lately?—No.

1666. How long since?—I have not had scab there for three years.

1667. Do you hold a certificate?—I hold fifteen or sixteen certificates, not for the run but for sheep. It is this way: when I had the scab I cleaned my sheep and then sold. A permit was given to those sheep.

1668. Your run was considered to be scabby?—No, it was clean. There were no sheep on it,

therefore it could not be scabby. But I never received a clean certificate for the run. I went to Napier, and bought sheep in Napier. I got a certificate for them. I brought them with me. The certificates were examined by Inspectors.

1669. As you passed over the boundary of Napier your certificate was examined?—That was considered sufficient by the Inspectors.

1670. You were allowed to pass through all subdivisions until you got to your run on the strength of that certificate?—Yes; in the same manner I got fifteen certificates.

1671. That is to say, you had fifteen lots of sheep brought on to this run?—Yes.

1672. In a similar manner?—Yes. Having so many certificates for sheep, I asked the Inspector, Mr. John Drummond, to take these certificates and to issue me a fresh one. I had no run certificate, as I have stated, but I had for sheep. Mr. Drummond examined the sheep in May last with the purpose of giving me a run certificate. He refused to give me the certificate, because he said the sheep were lousy. I then asked him to cancel the certificate I had, and to put them in the infected list. He said, "Will you dip them, and I will give you a certificate?" I said, "No; but if you will make every one else dip for lice I will do so." Drummond would not cancel my certificate on account of lice, because he would have to do the same for other people. That was fifteen months ago. I have repeatedly applied for a certificate by letter. I have applied to the department. The department wrote and told me that I must dip. I pointed out that every sheep in Wairarapa right through to Hawke's Bay was more or less in a lousy condition. The department declined to interfere with Mr. Drummond. They will not give me a certificate. He will not let my sheep go to market. He refuses to give me a certificate. There is nothing in the Act which compels him to give me a certificate. I think that if my sheep are not fit for a certificate the owners of other lousy sheep have no right to hold a certificate.

1673. How long ago do you say it is since Drummond refused to give you a certificate on account of lice being in your flock?—Fifteen months.

1674. What is the state of your flock now: is it entered in the infected list?—No.

1675. It stands, then, in rather a peculiar position, does it not?—Yes; a very peculiar position. I have certificates that embody forty thousand sheep, and I cannot take a mob of sheep away.

1676. Can you say what mob they belong to?—No; for the ear-marks vary.

1677. Do you own all those sheep now?—I have now only four thousand five hundred.

1678. What has become of the balance?—I have sold them.

1679. How did you manage to get them off the run?—I sold them on certificates which I got.

1680. From Hawke's Bay?—Yes.

1681. On the strength of those certificates, were the purchasers allowed to move the sheep?—Yes.

1682. Was there no objection to your being without the certificate of the Inspector of your district?—Mr. Orbell tried to obstruct them at the Ruamahunga River. He brought his man to prevent me driving over the bridge.

1683. On what grounds?—On three grounds; the first was that he had had no notice.

1684. Had you not sent notice?—No; I am not required to send notice under the Act. The Act requires the Inspector of the subdivision to do so.

1685. Then, this was a moving from subdivision to subdivision?—Yes.

1686. This was not going from one district to another?—No. He tried to treat the sheep as if they were going from one district into another.

1687. What is the clause of the Act?—No; it is under no clause of the Act. It is in the instructions to Inspectors, which directs that it shall be the duty of the Inspector to examine, and he shall then send notice of the "approach." I have the copy here, which I hand to the Chairman.

1688. Then, you say that it was no part of your duty to send the notice, but the duty of the Inspector of the next subdivision. What were the other objections?—The next was because the sheep had not the Government brand upon them.

1689. Why?—He said it was necessary.

1690. Why necessary?—I said it was not necessary. I said the Government brand only applied to sheep from port to port; that that was the shipping clause.

1691. And the third objection?—That was because the sheep had been certified by Mr. Pasley. It was on account of this obstruction that I applied again and again to Mr. Drummond, seeing that Mr. Orbell would not let the sheep go over.

1692. Let me understand you: the third objection was that the certificate was from Mr. Pasley, and not from the Inspector of the district?—Yes.

1693. Then, you think that the Act in that case was carried out improperly?—Yes, I do. I drove over. I would not stop. He called on me not to drive over, and tried to stop. I told my man to get a sheep and take it over, and if the Inspector put a hand on him I would try the case with him. The sheep passed over.

1694. Do you find fault with the Act itself or with the administration of it?—It is the way it is administered that I complain of.

1695. Do you wish to draw attention to any other case?—Yes; I wish to draw attention to two or three other cases. One is that of Mr. Dillon, who has two properties—one in Te Nui of about seventy acres, and one of about eight hundred acres farther back in the country. He purchased a number of clean sheep—sheep with a clean certificate.

1696. Where?—In Masterton. He then applied for a permit under the 46th section to be allowed to take these sheep through Johnson's Matikuna Run. He had to go through this run to get to his property: he could go no other way. The Inspector refused to give him a permit. He was obliged to hold these sheep on his seventy acres for two months alongside scabby sheep, because the Inspector would not give a permit for him to move his clean sheep under the 46th clause, thereby showing to my mind that, by holding these sheep alongside scabby sheep, when the

owner could have dipped and taken them through one infected district in one day, the Act was not properly administered in this case. The owner was prepared to take all precautions that were necessary, but the Inspector would not allow him to move his sheep, but preferred that they should be kept alongside scabby sheep for two months.

1697. Would you put this down to an error of judgment?—Yes.

1698. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Is this of your own personal knowledge?—Yes; but Mr. Dillon is here; he will be able to tell you.

1699. But the 46th clause: would not that clause justify the Inspector in refusing to permit them to pass?—I think the effect of that clause is that necessary precautions should be taken. It is not for preventing sheep travelling.

1700. Surely under that clause the Inspector might think himself justified in saying that you could not take sufficient precautions. It might be an error of judgment on his part, but he could refuse to give the permit?—I think not. I think the word "may" there means "shall" if sufficient precautions are taken. If he is not competent to say what are sufficient precautions, he is not competent to hold his appointment; but there are many who think that the word "reasonable" would be better, instead of "sufficient." The Inspector insisted on those clean sheep being kept for two months alongside scabby sheep, thus helping to spread infection, when they might have been dipped, and every precaution taken to go through one infected run in one day.

1701. What eventually became of these sheep?—They were taken to the eight hundred acres belonging to Mr. Dillon.

1702. What is the next case?—That is the Waioronga case. In this a certificate was given for the sheep: it was on the 28th June, 1882. I think it was two thousand one hundred that got certificates. In the following May, 1883, the certificate for Riversdale sheep (9,970) was cancelled on examination. Scab was found in the northern flocks in May, 1883. Riversdale Run is divided into several flocks. My brother made several applications between June and August for a permit to remove his six fat sheep to market from Waioronga. The permit was refused under the 46th clause.

1703. Because they had to travel through infected ground?—In October, when fat sheep ruled at a high price, my brother gave notice that he would shear and drive to market. After shearing the lot, Messrs. Benter came to purchase. To prevent my brother making the sale, Inspector Drummond gave him notice to brand S. My brother refused. The case was brought to Court. Mr. Drummond lost his case, and he had to give a permit.

1704. *Mr. Buchanan.*] What date was that when he had to give the permit?—It was in December, 1883.

1705. On what ground did Mr. Drummond call on him to mark his sheep under the 25th section?—Mr. Drummond had examined them three or four times previously, and he never called on my brother to brand S. It was not until my brother said, if Mr. Drummond would not give him a permit, he would take the sheep *via* Flatpoint and Tupurupuru to Carterton.

1706. Was it on the ground that the Riversdale Station was infected, and that this was supposed to be a portion of the sheep of that station?—That was Mr. Drummond's opinion. He considered the whole were infected. He was shown certificates that were still in force for Waioronga. They are worked by two managers, although my brother is the owner of one, and the lessee of the other.

1707. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Then, the portion your brother leased was infected?—Yes.

1708. And the freehold was not infected?—Not infected.

1709. Then, in making the return under the Sheep Act, it would be made separate for the separate parts?—Yes.

1710. Do they adjoin each other?—They are divided by the river and by fences.

1711. Were they worked from the one station?—No; they had separate yards; they had separate means for everything that was to be done.

1712. Do you know, as an actual fact, whether Mr. Drummond knew that they came from one run or separate runs?—Mr. Drummond insisted that the sheep were worked together because the two flocks belonged to the one man.

1713. But the sheep were from the same run?—No; the sheep were worked separately. Mr. Drummond wanted to show that they had been worked from the one yard. On dipping the sheep to the satisfaction of Valance, permit was refused unless the broad-arrow was put on. They had the station-brand. On receiving the permit it was found that, although filled up by Inspector Valance, it was signed by Mr. Drummond; thus certifying that he had examined 1,600 which were examined by Mr. Valance, while Mr. Drummond never was present.

1714. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Do you say, then, that this was a false declaration on his part?—Yes; he signed a permit which certifies that he had examined these sheep on that day, when he did not do so.

1714. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you anything further to remark?—There is another case. When Riversdale became due for certificate on the 26th January this year—they were due before—Drummond had examined the sheep three months before—some sheep had been due for certificate then for four months. He never found anything wrong with the sheep. But he asked to have some of the sheep dipped, and said that he would come and see them again; but he did not come until three months later, and then we could not get him to come to time. When he examined the sheep for certificate on the 26th January last, having examined two thousand, he then called on my brother to put the letter S on them. My brother refused, and said "They are clean and are due for their certificate. If, however, you find scab upon them, I will put the S on them; but they are clean. If you put the S brand on them it defeats the object of the Act. It depreciates their value; it is tantamount to putting S on with one hand and giving a certificate with the other. What do you ask me to do?"

1716. He could only put that on when the sheep were infected?—But Drummond said they are infected until such time as I shall give a certificate,

1717. When were they last gazetted as infected?—In May, 1883, the certificate was cancelled. The sheep were shorn three weeks. The brand had been shorn off. He (Drummond) wanted the brand renewed. Then he went to Masterton to lay an information. He (Drummond) stated to me what his case was. I told him the department would never allow such a case to be taken. Then subsequently, on the 11th February, he returned. On the 11th February he commenced to examine all the sheep. On the 15th February he gave a certificate. I asked Drummond how it was that he gave a certificate without compelling the letter S to be put on. He, said “I was advised to examine the sheep and take my action, if I found scab, against your brother for not branding his sheep.”

1718. Legally he was bound to brand; but later he got the certificate. But the intention of the Act is that the S should be put only on those sheep that are actually diseased with scab. The introduction to the clause says that “scabby sheep are to be branded with the letter S.” What is the meaning of “infected” sheep?—Sheep which may have become infected by interpretation of the Act, but which are not part of a diseased flock.

1719. Turn to the 8th interpretation clause, which says, “Any sheep which, having been infected within six months, shall be considered,” &c.?—The inference I draw is that it does not follow that an infected sheep need be a scabby one.

1720. Were they on a run where other sheep were?—“Any sheep that have been within three months infected with scab, and are depastured on ground on which there have been scabby sheep,” &c.?—Yes; but I do not think the intention of the Act was to apply that clause to sheep removed twenty or thirty miles away, and divided by a number of fences and wire netting.

1721. It appears to me that the intention of the Act is contrary to what you contend; but that will be a question for the Committee to consider. The Act appears to require that all sheep in the same holding, or that are worked from the same station, shall be considered infected sheep, even though they may be in paddocks miles away. They have to be treated in the same way—that is, there is no difference in regard to them from those which are actually scabby?—I contend that it should not be so. We have suggested an alteration in the Act as regards that—namely, that actually diseased sheep shall be branded with the letter S; that flocks shall be branded with the station-brand, and shall be kept branded; each flock should be branded differently.

Hon. the Chairman: That involves an alteration that will properly come under the notice of the Committee.

1722. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Have you another case?—Yes; when the certificate was given by the Inspector for the Riversdale sheep, on the 15th February, they were dipped. I and others interviewed Mr. Drummond as to simultaneous dipping; for all the sheep in our part of the infected district between Whareama and Kaihata Rivers, all south, were then clean. I asked the Inspector if he would interview the settlers and get them to have one simultaneous dip. He agreed to this, and saw my brother on the subject. At first my brother would not agree, because he had only recently dipped his sheep; but subsequently my brother agreed. My brother dipped as agreed; but some others down south would not do it; then there were people in the north who would not do it. There was an Inspector to see that every one did it. When my brother was dipping these sheep at the instance of Inspector Drummond for one simultaneous dip, he asked Inspector Valance to supervise the dipping of some fat sheep that he wanted to send to market. It was necessary the dipping should be supervised. He had then a certificate of two months and a week old. It was not necessary for him to dip at all. Inspector Valance saw them dipped. They were in a mob of four thousand. There was a day appointed when Inspector Valance was to come and give the necessary permission. He did not keep his appointment. They had but one day's journey before they could travel. My brother thought he would get the written permission on the road. They were travelling on the certificate. Information was laid against my brother, and he was fined £50. Mr. Wardell asked Inspector Drummond, in view of the fact that Mr. Valance had seen the sheep dipped, and that the sheep were being dipped at Drummond's instance for a simultaneous dipping, to withdraw the case. Drummond said he could not, and Mr. Wardell had to fine my brother £50, saying he had no option in the matter.

1723. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Under what section of the Act was that?—Under the 29th section.

1724. Was that on the ground that your brother had several flocks depasturing on the same run, one of which flocks was infected?—Yes; but nearly three months after being granted the certificate.

1725. The words of the clause, “unless with written permission of the Inspector, he shall be liable to a penalty”?—We thought that, having been dipped under supervision. He promised to come, but he did not come to give permission. I ought to have stated here that one of the reasons assigned for Valance not giving a permit under the 29th section was, that Drummond had not supplied him with a form signed in blank; another was, that they wished to trap my brother into a fine.

1726. Have you no remedy against the Inspector?—We have no remedy. We cannot get written communications from the Inspector. We have written a number of letters, but they will not reply to them. The Act requires them to send written communications, but they do not.

1727. What was the date of those proceedings you mention before Mr. Wardell?—I cannot give you the exact date; it would be about the end of last April.

1728. Is there any other case?—Yes; there is another: Mr. Harvey's case. Mr. Harvey purchased, through his agent, Mr. Bishop, in Hawke's Bay, sixty rams. Hawke's Bay is a clean district. They were driven to the boundary. They came through various subdivisions, until they got to the boundary of Wellington and Hawke's Bay. Seven days' notice was given to Mr. Drummond.

1729. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Seven days being the required time?—Yes; but Mr. Munro, who lives on the boundary, has charge of the boundary. He examined the sheep when they came to the boundary-gate. Mr. Harvey omitted to give the seven days' notice to Mr. Drummond. The

consequence was that he (Mr. Munro) stopped the sheep and kept them in quarantine until the seven days' notice was given Inspector Drummond. Mr. Munro, as I stated, examined these sheep and saw them go through the boundary. When Mr. Paisley heard that these sheep had gone into another district out of his district, without a certificate, he wired that the certificate would be sent by mail, as he did not know they were going out of his district.

1730. The man took them out without a certificate?—There is nothing in this Act which says that, if these sheep were clean before the passing of this Act of 1878, they should have a certificate. When Mr. Drummond heard that the sheep had come through the boundary-gate without a certificate, he sent to Mr. Harvey to demand the certificate, which he knew Mr. Harvey had not got. He laid an information, and Mr. Harvey was fined £10.

1731. Under what clause was that?—Clause 40. He was fined £10, notwithstanding the Hawke's Bay District being a clean district. There is nothing in the Act that says clean sheep shall have a certificate at all.

1732. Was that prior to this Act?—No; there is nothing in this Act which says that sheep which were clean before this Act shall have a certificate. Mr. Harvey was fined, notwithstanding that Drummond had the seven days' notice. By the regulation under the Act it is necessary that sheep should have a certificate to go through. It was Mr. Munro's duty to give that certificate. It was Drummond's duty to see they had that certificate, and therefore that the regulations under the Act had not been complied with. The fault was the Inspector's, not Mr. Harvey's. Mr. Munro should have given a certificate when they came to the boundary. Mr. Drummond's duty was to indorse that certificate when they came through the boundary.

1733. But did Mr. Drummond get the necessary notice?—Drummond had seven days' notice that they were waiting there to come through.

1735. What did Drummond do?—He did not take any notice at all; when he found that Mr. Harvey had not the certificate on paper he laid an information and had him fined £10.

1736. But he was obliged to have it?—The Inspector did not give it him.

1737. A person purchasing clean sheep gets a clean certificate with them?—They have no clean certificate in Hawke's Bay; that is a clean district.

1738. How is it with the purchaser of sheep, say, in Otago, for instance?—It rests simply with the Inspector. If the Inspector knows the sheep are going out of the district he gives a certificate; but there are no certificates within the district.

1739. No Inspector would refuse to give a certificate for sheep going out of the district?—He should not.

1740. Should not the purchaser have applied to get a certificate when he knew that he was—or, rather, the sheep were—going out of the district?—Not necessarily.

1741. Clearly, he was obliged to have a certificate, and should have taken steps to have obtained it. Do you not think it was Mr. Munro's duty not to have allowed those sheep to go through unless he had examined them?—The whole of the onus falls on the Inspector.

1742. Is there anything in the Act that will throw the responsibility of keeping them on the boundary on the Inspector?—I think there is in introducing sheep from infected into clean districts; for instance, that they cannot travel a certain distance without being dipped. They ought to be dipped within three miles. Mr. Harvey's fence was a part of the boundary between Wellington and Hawke's Bay District. He had merely to open his gate and let them through. He did not drive them the three miles. When the case was over Mr. Harvey applied to Mr. Drummond for a certificate. Mr. Drummond said it was not necessary, because they came under his run certificate the moment they were through his gate—the provincial boundary gate.

1743. When was that case?—It came on at the same time as the last case of my brother's. It was about the end of April or the beginning of May. But when the case came on these facts did not come out—the facts under the regulations for the Inspector, and the facts of the run being the boundary fence.

1744. You draw a distinction between a run certificate and a sheep certificate: what is your suggestion as regards that?—I suggest that every run should have a certificate. It is necessary that every run should be examined at least once a year. There are runs in our district which have not been examined for eight or ten years.

1745. Is there no scab at all on them?—It is difficult to say with so much lice about. I do not know that there is any; I do not think so. I am talking of runs within infected subdivisions.

1746. Are there any that are not inspected and have no certificates?—Mine is the only one I know of.

Mr. Buchanan: It is proved that the old Provincial certificate shall hold good until it is cancelled.

1747. *Hon. the Chairman*.] I wanted to ask you as to several flocks on the same run: Take the case of its becoming infected and scab breaking out in one corner. If that run is cut up and leased to other persons, can the persons on the other portions of the run retain a clean certificate, although, if the whole of the land remained in the hands of one person, the whole runs would be an infected run?—Yes; it can be done.

1748. Do you know a case?—I know Mr. Andrew's case.

1749. What was that case?—The whole of his run became an infected run. There was scab in the flock. All the sheep were dipped. Mr. Andrews sold two or three thousand sheep to his son, and leased to him a portion of the property. When the sheep were examined for certificate, only that portion which he leased to his son was clean.

1750. In nine months?—When the sheep were three months from last being dipped he examined all the sheep, and found that only those which had been on the run leased to Mr. Andrews's son were clean. They got the certificate.

1751. The whole of the sheep and only those sheep on the leased run were found clean?—Yes.

1752. Then, dividing his one run into different runs enabled him to treat them as separate properties?—Yes; they had all that was necessary: they had separate yards, separate dip, and separate house.

1753. Is there anything else that you would suggest?—I would propose that the Fencing Act should be worked with this Act: that we should know what constitutes a sheep-proof fence. It is always left to the opinion of the Inspector. I think that an eight-wire fence, with posts 9ft. a part, should be constituted a sheep-proof fence.

1754. Seven wires are used now?—If a man should put a wire fence round every block in compliance with a Fencing Act, that fence being the same in every respect as that provided by Fencing Act; if that man keeps his sheep separate he should have a separate certificate for every flock: let him have the necessary yards and dip; if all his sheep are clean he can keep them on his run, if they are infected let him keep them divided. It should be insisted that there should be a separate brand, so that there should be no mixing of the flocks. That is what settlers are now doing. They are beginning to work their runs separately. That the Inspectors have acknowledged to be sufficient, and it should not be necessary to have two leases.

1755. *Mr. Lance.*] In our parts we never use wooden standards: which would you recommend, wood or iron?—Iron and wood.

1756. *Mr. Buchanan.*] I should like to put a question or two, under the 46th clause, relating to the case of Mr. Dillon: What was the class of sheep which Mr. Dillon purchased?—Merino ewes.

1757. Were they old sheep?—I believe they were.

1758. Do you know whether the place—this eight hundred acres of back country—was fenced?—I cannot say that; I believe not.

1759. You say he drove them to Te Nui?—Yes; he was compelled to keep his sheep there.

1760. In what sense; because they were old sheep?—I cannot say because they were old sheep.

1761. Was he free to drive them back to Masterton if he chose?—I believe so.

1762. These sheep being old ewes, do you think it was possible to keep them without straying over the adjoining country?—I think almost impossible. I think it was undesirable to have kept them for two months alongside scabby sheep. I think they should have gone through. It was better to have let them go through, being perfectly clean, than holding them in that position for two months and then letting them go.

1763. Do you know, as a matter of fact, that it was, in Mr. Drummond's opinion, the danger of these old ewes getting infected and carrying scab about the country that led to his detaining them?—I do; but the risk must have been intensified a thousandfold by holding them against scabby sheep for two months; and, by Matikuna getting its certificate, Drummond lost his power over clause 46.

1764. Is there not considerable damage arising from sheep straying on to Government lands?—Yes. I think the Government ought to take steps to prevent sheep straying on to scabby Government land.

1765. Where is this land?—Near Puketoe. I think the Government ought to take steps to buy those sheep that are surrounded by scabby Crown-lands sheep, and have them all destroyed. In Mr. Leverton's case he has about two thousand. He is employed by Government in killing wild sheep. While he is doing that he drives many on to his own run. He is not able to get all his sheep in. He is breeding sheep that go wild, and then killing them at 5s. a head for the Government.

Mr. JACKSON, examined.

1766. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you anything to say with respect to scab in sheep?—I have been looking through the Scab Act. I have no scab in my sheep. I have only dipped for ticks and lice; but I think that some one or two of the sections might be altered with advantage. I refer particularly to the section where there is an infliction of the penalty of 3d. a head. That is too much in a rough country. I think it ought to be a 1d. instead.

1767. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] You have no experience of scab yourself. Have you neighbours that have had scabby sheep?—I have never been scabby myself. I only look at the practical thing which a man can do. I think it is a great injury to the great majority of settlers that stoats, weasels, and ferrets should be turned out to destroy one industry for the sake of pampering another. I am speaking as a sheep-farmer. You have no right to turn such animals out unless you can keep them on your own land. There are several places where the settlers have had all their poultry destroyed by ferrets—sometimes in one night.

Hon. the Chairman: We can understand and sympathize with those settlers; but we are considering a different matter. We are now considering the Sheep Act.

1668. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do you know of ferrets having killed lambs?—In a letter written by a friend of mine (Mr. Bennett) he said that he had nineteen motherless lambs, and a bitch ferret got in one night and killed eight.

1769. Who told you this?—My neighbour told me.

Mr. Dodson: No doubt he heard it.

1770. *Captain Fraser.*] You never saw a ferret kill a lamb?—I never saw a ferret kill a lamb; but Mr. Bennett told me it was a fact.

Mr. Buchanan: This phase of the question has been brought out only to a very little extent before the Committee. It is a serious aspect of the whole subject. I think we ought to get all the information on this view of it that is possible.

Hon. Captain Fraser: We have it in evidence that the ferret has never been known to touch a lamb, and they are employed in all parts of Marlborough.

1771. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I shall ask the witness one or two more questions: Do you find any difficulty in catching these ferrets when they come on to your ground?—No.

1772. You can catch them easily?—Yes; I know a shed where two ferrets were poisoned.

1773. Apparently, then, there is no difficulty in keeping down the number of ferrets if they should commence to kill?—I cannot speak from experience.

1774. You say it is not difficult to catch them?—No, it is not.

1775. Were those you have seen very savage and fierce?—No, they were not.

1776. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do you know the polecat: will they kill lambs?—The fougart they call it. I have only seen two in my life, and they were dead. But they are so scarce even in England that they have no chance to live. They are so fierce that every man's hand is against them. The stoat gets into a stone wall. If they can live in England, where every man's hand is against them, they will live here. I think the ferrets, if they should become numerous, will be harder to kill than you think for.

Mr. MARTIN, Jun., Wairarapa, examined.

1777. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you any evidence to give the Committee as to the working of the Sheep Act?—The difficulty with regard to sheep seems to be the Crown lands. I have not much knowledge on the subject, but I do know that to be one great difficulty in cleaning sheep.

1778. That is the great source from which flocks are scabbed?—Yes.

1779. Can you say, as to the working of the Sheep Act in your district, if it is carried out impartially and in a proper manner?—I think so.

1780. You have nothing to say against the administration of the Act: you think the Inspectors are good men and well appointed?—Yes.

1781. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Have you had scab in your flocks?—Yes.

1782. Did you find the Act was sufficiently carried out in your case, and that you were made to clean your sheep under the present Act?—Yes.

Mr. TULLY, examined.

1783. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I would ask you whether you have anything to tell the Committee about the Sheep Act; whether it is working satisfactorily?—As far as I know it is.

1784. Have you nothing further to say on the subject of sheep?—No.

WEDNESDAY, 10TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. W. BEETHAM, examined.

1785. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You live in the Wairarapa?—Yes; I am at present living at Masterton.

1786. Is that East Wairarapa?—Yes.

1787. Is that an infected district?—Every district is said to be an infected district in which there is scab. Yes; it is an infected district.

1788. Have you any scab on your run or in the immediate neighbourhood?—We have no scab in the immediate neighbourhood; but we lately purchased a property in which there were some scabby sheep—some wild sheep. We purchased the property of 5,000 acres in a dangerous part of a scabby district. The sheep, if they have not been killed, have gone back to the Government land. I would say that on this property we have no sheep.

1789. Then, the scab you speak of comes from sheep running on Government land previously?—Yes; we have no scabby sheep.

1790. Is there much Government land in the neighbourhood of that which you occupy?—There is a very large block; the very largest block in the North Island.

1791. Is that bush or open land?—It is nearly all bush. There is a little open land. There are scabby sheep there, I am sure.

1792. Have any attempts been made to get rid of them?—Attempts have been made, but I do not think they have been sufficient. There is a very good man up there; he does all he can; he is an exceptionally-good man. It is impossible that he could deal successfully with so large a difficulty.

1793. Who is the man you refer to?—Leverton: he owns some scabby sheep himself. There are only two men that do not hold a clean certificate in the district; he is one of them. He is not an Inspector, but he gets a bonus of 5s. a head, I think, for each sheep he kills. He does his best, but I think that sufficiently-energetic measures have not, as yet, been taken.

1794. Are those the only means that have been taken?—The only means.

1795. Who is the Sheep Inspector for the district?—Mr. John Drummond.

1796. Does he do his work efficiently?—I think it would be impossible to find a better man. He is energetic and painstaking.

1797. How do you think the Act works—satisfactorily or otherwise?—I think the Act should be amended. A fortnight ago a meeting of settlers was held in the Wairarapa. It was well attended, and a report of the meeting was published in the daily paper. The suggestions made there might be summed up in the recommendation to allow separate flocks, and that, within a certain radius of scab, men should be compelled to have an efficient dip, according to the size of their flocks; also always to have in hand sufficient material to dip their own flocks at a moment's notice. The cause of the spread of scab is the neglect of these precautions. Not having material on hand, the disease spreads to the surrounding district, when it might be prevented or checked.

1798. Is not that provided for by section 52 of the Act. But you refer to having the material ready at hand although a man's sheep were not scabby?—I think he ought to have it ready for immediate use. There are one or two instances of men having scabby sheep adjoining these Crown lands. These men had no dip on hand; they had no chance of getting a dip. A lime-and-sulphur dip could not be prepared within a month. I would refer to a small flock of, say, one

thousand sheep in the midst of very large runs. If these owners of small flocks had scabby sheep, and if nothing could be done for a month because it was impossible they could be prepared for the emergency, it does seem a great hardship that a man who had, say, twenty or thirty sheep should, with impunity, infect the whole of the surrounding runs. As scab travels quickly from one run to another, it is therefore desirable that all persons having sheep-farms should have at hand sufficient material with which to dip their sheep.

1799. Have there been any cases in your district where sheepowners have been summoned, and the Inspectors failed to prove against them. Do you remember the case of Telford and Meredith: do you remember the circumstances of the case?—I do not know whether it was the Act itself or whether it was the want of evidence that led to failure in that case. I know nothing of the management of Mr. Meredith's property. There have been very few fines inflicted although scab had been in the district a good while. I hope it may soon be stamped out.

1800. Have you any other suggestions?—I would suggest that the question of separate flocks is a very important matter. People must be prevented from selling or removing sheep within twenty miles radius of scab without asking the Inspector. I think, under proper restrictions, an Act should be so framed that men should be allowed to sell on proving to the Inspector that there was no disease, and that the flock was a clean and separate flock.

1801. The Acts does refer to that in a definition of what a run means. I suppose you would not recommend that the amendment should apply to separate flocks, where they all belong to the same premises. If a run were divided in two by a fence, the sheep on this side would go to these yards, and the Inspector would have power to consider them as separate flocks?—If that power were left with an intelligent Inspector it would be so, but the Act seemed rather to refer to its being in the hands of an unintelligent Inspector. In branding sheep, for instance, a scabby sheep from the bush would require, say, fifty thousand sheep to be branded with the letter S if scab showed itself; thus branding the whole of the sheep on the run, which might not by any other means be infected. One of these sheep would get out to a neighbour's run, and he also would have to brand with the letter S. Sheep that are or may be infected should be branded with a distinct colour. I think myself that a distinct colour would be the best. A colour should be used instead of the letter S. There is a strong reason, I think, why separate flocks should be allowed.

1802. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] I understand you to say that the Government pays the owner so much a head for killing his own scabby sheep?—The owner at the time had a clean flock. He took sheep out of the country for many years, and kept them perfectly clean. It is only within the last few months that his certificate has been cancelled. He was surrounded by scabby sheep in the bush. These scabby sheep were on Government land. He is a very energetic man. Every year he destroyed considerable numbers of wild cattle and sheep. I think it was only two years ago he was offered a bonus for wild sheep. The bush was full of them round about there.

1803. Were they his own sheep?—No, not his own sheep. I feel sure that he was never paid for any of his own sheep.

1804. Then, as to the skins, they would be worth something?—He kept the skins and sold them.

1805. You said that in some parts of the district it is impossible to erect dips: would you qualify that statement and say it is difficult?—There is nothing impossible, but it would be very difficult to get timber up within a month. I was told by a gentleman that if the Act were stringently carried out you could do that in the Wairarapa with little difficulty. I knew a gentleman who got timber up under more difficult circumstances in a very short time.

1806. *Hon. Mr. Nurse.*] Do you not think the word "immediate" in this Act is very tyrannical; and, as you said it was almost impossible to erect a dip, that time should be given. A month seems a very short time?—I qualified that by saying in a district where scab is known to exist; but in a new district I did not say that it is necessary. Afterwards, however, he should have a dip. I think that is a matter of vital importance. I know of numberless instances of scab being spread by men not being able to take the matter in hand at once. The East Coast District is in very great danger from the cause I speak of. Now things look a little more hopeful; with the exception of the wild sheep in the bush it might be stamped out in a few months. But here is a case: A man has 1,000 sheep not surrounded by fences, or very poor fences. There are sheep in every direction round him. He has no dip. The Inspector has no power to go to him and say, "You must have a dip." A month would scarcely be sufficient to put up a dip. But if there are no scabby sheep the Inspector has no power. A man could not be made to do so until some of his sheep were scabby. But the delay of a month is a very serious matter. The Inspector ought to be in a position to say, "You must have your dip now." According to the Act, he may have a month after his flock becomes scabby. It might be limited to a radius.

1807. *Hon. the Chairman.*] A radius of forty miles you suggest?—Yes; forty miles is a long distance, but I do not think it is too much. Most sheep-farmers have dips, but a man who has a small flock may be in considerable danger, and may be the means of spreading disease.

1808. *Hon. Mr. Nurse.*] Then you say that every owner must put up a dip whether his sheep be infected or not?—In scabby districts a man who acts intelligently will have one.

1809. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Lice are common among sheep. How would you get rid of them, Must the sheep be dipped?—

1810. *Mr. Buchanan.*] As a matter of fact the Act puts lice in sheep under the same conditions as scab?—Yes; it would be no hardship to compel a man to have a dip, even if there were no scab in his flock. I think every intelligent sheep-farmer should have a dip. It is his interest to have one.

1811. No doubt it is very desirable in his own interests as well as that of others?—It is only the small owners who are commonly unintelligent or negligent. Every sheep-farmer should have a dip; but I know an instance where a man could not get up his dip for a month.

1812. Would you support the change to local management from what is known as the central form?—I should be against that. We have had experience of that. I do not think such a change would be good.

1813. Would you leave the power in the hands of the Inspector as to the dip to be used?—I should specify for scab lime and sulphur.

1814. What I meant was, would you put it into the power of the Inspector to recommend some dip?—If the Inspector were an intelligent man. But an Inspector might be mixed up in the interests of some quack affair. That would not be right. I would specify a dip for scab—lime and sulphur.

1815. Would you leave the onus on the sheepowner that he should find his own dip?—I would not leave it in the hands of the Inspector to specify any dip.

1816. Do you think that sheep should be marked by a distinct colour?—I think the Government might be requested to do it. I think that any surplus funds of the department might be applied to that.

1817. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Has the management of the department been satisfactory in your opinion?—We have had a great many men who worked hard and did their best. At the meeting, to which I have referred, resolutions were passed to the effect that the Act had been maladministered in the district; but there were many men at the meeting who thought otherwise.

1818. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Did the opinion of the meeting apply to present Inspectors or to past ones?—Those who voted for the resolutions, many of them, thought the Act was administered properly and fairly.

1819. *Captain Russell.*] You spoke of the Act being administered by intelligent or non-intelligent Inspectors: do you think there should be any discretion left to Inspectors?—I did not speak of any particular Inspector; I referred to separate flocks being allowed. An intelligent Inspector could, I think, make separate flocks. I think the Act should be plainer in this respect.

1820. You think the general tendency should be to limit the powers of Inspectors, and make them carry out the Act in its entirety?—Yes.

1821. *Mr. Lance.*] As regards these bush lands, by energetic working of the Act, could not your district be cleaned in a short time?—I think so. The property we purchased was the worst part of it. Now we have fallen the whole of the bush it is nearly stamped out. It was from a special piece of land that the scab spread. There still exist some scabby sheep inland, as well as in the bush.

1822. Do you think that the payment of 5s. a head reduced it considerably: would not a number of men employed for the purpose be equally effectual?—I think the Inspector should have power to engage good men to go into the thing. Leverton is a good man. Few men could do what he has done; but his hands are full now.

1823. If the Inspector had authority he could do it?—Yes; I think it ought to be done within the next three months.

1824. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Would it not be a better plan to give payment for the last sheep?—I do not think payment per head would get the last sheep. I think a good stamp of men should be employed.

1825. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] You say that the Government pays 5s. per head and the pelt?—Yes; he gets the pelt. I think he sells the pelt: in some cases he gets 15s. for the pelt.

1826. If that were known to the general public, would not a considerable number of people go in to kill scabby sheep in the surrounding country, and so help to keep the flocks clean: how is it that no recommendation of this kind has been made to the Government?—I think that recommendation has been made to the Government. I think Mr. Bayly in his last report refers to it. I know that another Inspector did so some years ago.

Hon. Captain Fraser: If you say that the disease could be got rid of in three months, it appears to me a monstrous thing that it should have been allowed to exist so long.

1827. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You say that the person who kills the sheep sends down the skins and sells them; is there not danger of spreading the disease in that manner?—Yes; the Act requires that they should be put into bales. Our manager took some skins, and the fact of there being scabby sheep in the district caused him to be fined some £6 or £7.

MONDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. LEWIS, examined.

1827A. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are Chief Inspector of the Auckland District?—I am.

1828. Including several subdivisions?—Yes.

1829. How long have you been holding that appointment?—Since 1879; since the Act came into force.

1830. The Act came into force on the 1st January, 1879?—It was then I was appointed.

1831. You have scab in some of your subdivisions, have you not?—Yes, in two subdivisions—the Marsden Subdivision and the Auckland Subdivision.

1832. Has there been any diminution of scab?—There has.

1833. Take the Marsden Subdivision first: this return states that there are two owners, Messrs. McLeod and Cork, who have become scabby; one has a flock of fifty, and the other one hundred and twenty. I imagine these sheep run within fences; why are they not clean?—They are clean now; their names are not on the list. We have other names on the list and other flocks.

1834. How do you account for scab continuing in Auckland?—It is most unaccountable. These are all small flocks, and are soon cleaned or killed off; but we soon find another case or cases within a mile or two miles, for which we cannot account.

1835. Will you state to the Committee what steps are taken to clean in your district?—Notice is given to the owners not to suffer one to leave his ground. All of the sheep are bound to be

dipped, generally under the supervision of an Inspector. Seldom is there a failure of cure in small lots.

1836. Are they ever allowed to be moved to sell?—No, never to sell them. The butchers would not buy, as they would be afraid of their trade being injured. We would not give them permission to be taken to the saleyards.

1837. Then, there is a good deal of bush land?—Yes, there is in the neighbourhood of one flock in the Marsden Subdivision.

1838. Is it to that, do you think, that the continuance of scab is due: but let me first ask you whether the Inspector allows the owners of these scabby sheep to be outside fences?—I think not; I think that the law is strictly enforced in that respect; but with these small owners in a rough country they will not give notice to the Inspector. They would rather run the risk of prosecution than give notice and put themselves into the hands of the Inspector.

1839. Have you had many prosecutions?—Not more than three or four.

1840. Have you succeeded in convicting?—Yes; I was up in Marsden, and found upon a road some half-dozen sheep diseased; they were branded; the owner was fined.

1841. Were there any fines remitted?—A year ago I had some cases for not giving notice. Four were convicted and fined £10. One-half of the penalty was remitted on my recommendation, because these persons were wholly ignorant of the nature of the disease or the proceedings.

1842. In what subdivision was that?—In the Auckland Subdivision.

1843. What staff have you?—I have an assistant in each subdivision. There are two Inspectors, myself and an assistant, in the Auckland Subdivision.

1844. Do they make periodical visits, and qualify themselves with the necessary knowledge to tell the state of the flocks?—Yes; to a certain extent. In Marsden and Auckland they require to be constantly on their guard.

1845. You state that some persons whom you prosecuted and convicted were ignorant of scab: does it not follow from that that the Inspectors should constantly keep their eyes on these flocks?—Certainly, they should do so. But the working of these small flocks takes a great deal of time. A man may be running from one to the other without doing any good. When there is anything suspicious, the Chief Inspector instructs a man to go to the place. Among these small farmers there is a great indisposition to disclose the real case to the Inspector. They prefer to take themselves the chance of curing.

1846. Have you ever given instructions to the Inspector to proceed?—Yes; in every case where scab has been discovered, and notice has not been given by the owners themselves or through their servants.

1847. How long has scab been in the district?—It has been in the district for fifteen or sixteen years. It has broken out repeatedly from various causes which we cannot tell. There was one flock of eight ewes; there was a ram running with them; the ram has been destroyed. In this case the owner of the eight ewes bought the ram five months before, and put him in with the ewes, which were clean; there was not a spot on the ewes, but the disease was all down the back of the ram.

1848. The ram was scabby when he was put in?—It was purchased before any scab was discovered in the rest of the flock.

1849. Is there any inspection of sheep before they are moved?—Not if they are clean. These were not in the infected list, and were considered clean.

1850. Did they not have a certificate?—We do not give clean certificates for sheep upon farms; when sheep are condemned for scab they are put on the infected list.

1851. Is it not customary to give a clean certificate when they are moved?—To drive them from one subdivision to any other does not require a permit; you cannot compel them to have a permit.

1852. This is an infected district, is it not?—Yes.

1853. Does not the Act provide for that in an infected district?—No; there is nothing whatever in it. You could not prosecute a man for not having a permit between the North Cape and the Hawke's Bay boundary: being within the one district he may drive them where he pleases; but, if he has to put sheep across an infected run, then he is obliged to have an Inspector there to dress them.

1854. Is there no danger in passing clean sheep through an infected district?—Roads are frequently a great source of scab. I have seen clean sheep pass within a hundred yards of scab, but nothing could be said to the owner of the clean sheep.

1855. What would you suggest as a remedy for this evil?—When sheep have been condemned, or where it is known that there is scab in a flock, the Inspector might have power to cause them to be dipped three times, if necessary. After that he might have permission to let them go, instead of keeping them back for three months. The owners of these small flocks have a great fear of putting them under the surveillance of the department.

1856. You mean that they are afraid to give intelligence when scab breaks out?—Yes; they would rather try to cure it themselves.

1857. Then, do they set to work and dip for scab themselves?—Yes; they dip, but they do not cure.

1858. Without giving notice?—Yes.

1859. Is not that a provision of the Act that notice should be given, which should be enforced?—Yes, if it is known; but it is not known until afterwards. No proceedings can be taken after six months. A man might tell what he had done seven months before, and the Inspector would have no power to take legal steps against him.

1860. Do you know Mr. Bainbridge's sheep?—Yes; very well.

1861. Had he scabby sheep?—Yes; it was from his flock that the ram went to the eight ewes.

1862. There has been evidence given here of a case where, about seven years ago, some scabby

sheep were bought and taken home; but I am reminded that that would be before this Act came into force?—I might be able to tell you if I knew the name.

1863. Are you aware of any instance where information has not been laid for breach of the Act?—I am not, where the case could be proved.

1864. Has the Act been carried out impartially?—To the best of my knowledge it has.

1865. Do you know whether one has been favoured more than another?—In my case I have never connived at the existence of scab. Whenever a case occurred I marked it.

1866. Do you not consider the continuance of scab a very serious thing?—Yes; very serious; nothing could be more so for the sheepowner.

1867. Do you think there is more difficulty in the case of small flocks than large ones?—I think so. Where the flocks are small it seems sometimes to spring up spontaneously, as it were, or as if the birds brought it from one place to another. Many persons are of this opinion.

1868. Do you really think that the birds carry scab about?—I do not think that they actually carry scab.

Hon. Mr. Waterhouse: I think it is very likely.

Hon. the Chairman: We have heard that the starlings have something to do with it.

Hon. Mr. Robinson: If you see a lot of sheep in a field and any are lying down, if starlings come about they will actually get up to let the birds alight on their backs. The sheep seem quite delighted.

1869. Can you suggest any plan—have you thought of anything—that would mitigate so great an evil?—I think that, instead of so much time being wasted in dipping clean sheep, if more time were spent in the inspection of flocks about the markets—I would be very particular about this—there would be a probability of stamping it out. But I should require a thoroughly-efficient man to work with me. The Chief Inspector and those whose business it is to carry out the Act should work together if there is any good to be done. No good can be done if the Inspector and his assistant do not work harmoniously together.

1870. Have you any remark to make about the appointment of Inspectors: do you think that where an Inspector is appointed to subdivisions he should regard himself as an assistant to the Inspector for the district?—I do: I have an assistant who does not please me at all, whom I could not get removed by any means.

1871. Are you consulted in the appointments?—The Superintendent Inspector told me he would send me a man when I wanted one. He lately sent me a gentleman, a Mr. Knyvett, I think, from Amuri.

1872. *Hon. Mr. Williamson*.] With regard to the question which you have been asked as to the frequent outbreak of scab in Auckland, do you not think that it arises in some degree through sheep coming from all parts of the country to the saleyards—both mutton and sheep (sheep for killing) and for stores; so that if there is scab of any extent that may have escaped the notice of the Inspector, supposing it to be in its incipient stages, when it would be difficult to discover it. The question I ask is whether scab may not be disseminated in this way through the country. I had a case within my own experience. My sheep got it from going to the slaughterhouse. I sent there five hundred sheep for killing for one of the vessels that was going Home. There was not room for the lot in the vessel. I had to send one hundred and fifty back. I got the scab on the way. I think, Mr. Lewis, that must account to a great extent for the frequency of scab breaking out in Auckland. But I may vary the question. Do you not think that, where there are small flocks so exposed to infection, where the owner is willing, in the interest of the community as well as the owner, it would be best to have them slaughtered?—Yes; slaughtered on the farm; but not driven off the farm until the Inspector is perfectly satisfied that all acari are killed.

1873. My own impression is that, if they are properly dipped and killed the same day, no infection could be given?—I should not let one of them go until it was perfectly certain—that, in point of fact, it would not be possible for them to communicate the disease.

1874. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse*.] Is not this the best season for detecting if scab is in a flock?—Yes; a very good time, now when sheep are lambing. If there is any scab in the flock you would soon see it.

1875. Then, if extra assistance were taken in now, with a view of securing a thorough inspection, would not that be one effectual means?—Yes; nothing could be better at this time of the year.

1876. You say that your staff is not sufficient at the present time to make that complete inspection which is desirable?—Not at present. If I had the sort of inspector I wish for we would attend to that specially.

1877. Does the Inspector invariably attend the market to inspect sheep?—Yes; he has very positive instructions never to neglect that.

1878. Has there been any case in which scab has been found at a market?—Not under the present Inspector.

1879. How long has he been in office?—Since January twelve months.

1880. Do many owners sell sheep frequently to the butchers without passing through the market?—Very few.

1881. They are driven into market?—Yes, in nine cases out of ten.

1882. Is there not a danger that the owner of scabby sheep, in these circumstances, would try to sell to the butchers, and so evade inspection?—I have not heard of that being done. The flocks are generally clean.

1883. If they were inspected in the market there would be little probability of the slaughter-yard being infected in the way the Hon. Mr. Williamson has described?—Owners of flocks adjoining infected farms would probably send their sheep there.

1884. Have you ever inspected sheep in the slaughteryards?—Yes; frequently.

1885. Have you ever found scab there?—Not in the slaughteryards.

1886. Whenever you find scab in Auckland, are the flocks as a rule badly infected?—Very little; perhaps not more than three or four sheep.

1887. I suppose the sheep-farmers have not ordinary appliances to enable them to dip?—No.

1888. How do they manage to dip?—Generally under supervision; an assistant goes up to supervise, or I go myself. But it happens that the small settlers often attempt to cure the disease themselves.

1889. *Mr. Walker.*] I notice there has been an increase of scab in Auckland from the 31st March, 1883, to the 31st March, 1884, from 231 to 1,459?—They must have increased; but many of the names in that return have passed away. You will find them very different on the next quarterly list.

1890. I am speaking of the number of sheep infected?—The number of sheep infected has increased, but they all belong to different owners. In one day sheep may be clean, and in ten days afterwards they might be infected.

1891. Do you think there is an increase?—We have not an increase on the infected list, but I would not say that there is not more scab in Auckland now than for many years past.

1892. In order to reduce that, do you consider that it is needful you should have special assistance?—I do. I should be glad if I could get it. Under the present system I am powerless.

1893. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Not through any defect in the Act, but through not having assistance for inspection?—Yes; not having efficient assistance.

1894. *Mr. Walker.*] How many Inspectors have you in the district?—Seven.

1895. Is it not possible for you, in those months specially liable to infection, to take one or two clean districts?—What is the date of the return you have there?

1896. March, 1884. There are 170 sheep against one district, and 1,008 against the other. You say there are only two districts in which the scab breaks out in this way?—Only two.

1897. Can you give a reason why there should be more supervision now than before?—The flocks are so small, and the disease breaks out so unexpectedly, that we have the greatest difficulty in tracing it to its source in many cases; in some cases it is impossible.

1898. Do you think that changing the Inspectors would be a good thing?—I do not think that changing the district Inspectors would be a good thing at all. There is a good man in charge of Marsden. I believe that he is most anxious, and does everything he can, to get rid of scab in his district. Marsden requires a good Inspector. There are about four hundred small flocks there on very rough country. In winter it is almost impossible to inspect the country.

1899. You do not think a change of districts for Inspectors would answer?—I do not. A few wicked men, that might have a dislike to the Inspector, with a view to injure him, might spread scab all over the country.

1900. Would it not be well to let an Inspector know that if the sheep were not cleaned he would be removed?—I should be sorry to let it be known that an Inspector was to be moved in that way. He would be subjected to a great deal of annoyance. I should be sorry to have charge of a subdivision on such terms.

1901. I am not speaking of the chief, but of the assistants?—I think if you could get a conscientious man whom you could trust—a man who would do his work and not trifle with it—if I had such a man I think that the disease would be stamped out in a very short time.

1902. It seems to me absurd that it could not be stamped out in six months even as you aver?—I feel as you do, that it is absurd that the disease cannot be stamped out; but it could be stamped out with efficient assistance.

1903. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What conclusion do you come to: is the Act in fault?—I do not say that.

1904. But the administration is at fault?—It appears to be absurd that scab is not stamped out; but the moment we get one flock clean it breaks out in another. We cannot trace the sources of scab, except that, if as has been suggested, it is carried by the birds from place to place. In some places, say Mangare, time after time we have found it impossible to get the sheep clean. They are clean one day, and a short time afterwards they are infected again.

1905. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Are there a great many starlings about there?—I cannot say in respect to any one place, but they are all over the country.

1906. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] You say you have only six or seven to assist you: how long have you been in Auckland, may I ask?—Thirty-eight years.

1907. What were you before you became Sheep Inspector?—I was engaged in farming for a great many years. I have been engaged in the inspection of sheep for twenty-two years.

1908. The sheep were scabby then?—Yes; but they were cleaned in three years.

1909. But they are scabby still?—The scab came in from the Taranaki side and from the East Coast.

1910. If I understand you right, it is not the insufficient number of your assistants that you complain of, but that you have not got the right sort of men?—That is what we want; with one or two good men more in Auckland, I think, you would soon hear the last of it.

1911. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Did that ram run with the ewes all the year round, may I ask?—They are always taken out: it may have been taken out; it may have been running with them by chance.

1912. Did you ever find a ram running with ewes in this way by chance: was it not your duty to enforce the Act?—Where there is a small flock dipped under supervision then I know that they are clean—if they were dipped under my own supervision and to my own satisfaction; then, if it was a valuable ram it would have to be destroyed, if ordered to be separated.

1913. There is nothing in the Act to destroy the ram, but there is power given to enforce a fine for a breach of the Act. Did you enforce it?—No; I did not.

1914. Then, I can see how it is that scab exists in Auckland?—It would have been the destruction of the ram.

1915. Was it not your duty to administer the Act according to the spirit and the letter of it?—
So I did.

1916. You say you have not enforced the 26th clause of the Act?—I had the ram taken away.

1917. You were simply evading the Act: have you ever found any person to run a ram with ewes in this way?—I never found it; I have not seen it. If I found it they would be instructed to take it away.

1918. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Was that at the time of the discovery of scab or afterwards that it would be taken away?—If I saw the scab afterwards I would take proceedings.

1919. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Has Auckland ever been clean?—Yes; about four years after I took charge.

1920. I understand you to say that Auckland has been infected ever since the Act came into force?—Yes; but most of this time was under the Provincial Act.

1921. You say that scab came from Poverty Bay: are you aware that in the first instance scab was taken from Auckland to Poverty Bay?—I have no doubt of it.

1922. Poverty Bay is a rough district: do you know how long it took them to stamp scab out there?—A couple of years.

1923. Do you think that Auckland is more difficult to clean than Poverty Bay?—There you have large flockowners, who take an interest in the eradication of scab; small flockowners take no interest in it.

1924. Do you not think it necessary, with a view to cleaning your district, that you should be severe rather than otherwise?—I take proceedings for breaches of the Act whenever I find them out and can prove them; but, as I have said before, you cannot do anything after six months.

1925. Are you aware that flockowners were fined in Poverty Bay for having rams with ewes?—Yes.

1926. Then, do you think that what was fair for one part of the colony was not fair for Auckland?—Not where you are sure they are all clean.

1927. Is it your opinion that the Act should be worked partially?—No; but I think it would be oppressive where there was one with clean ewes; it would be oppressive, I think—

1928. What does the Act require—that you should enforce the fines?—If you apply it then in one case and not in another, is not that acting partially?—I should say there was some discretionary power in that case.

1929. Well, I shall put to you in this way: do you think that there is a discretionary power?—Yes; in that case, where there is one ram with a few sheep.

1930. In the case of this small flock, we will say, there could be no more than sixteen lambs; the value of them, we shall say, would be 5s. a head, that would be £4 altogether: on the other hand, with regard to those flocks in Poverty Bay, there may be four thousand ewes; what would be the value of the lambs in this case?—No doubt it would be much more.

1931. Would it be near £2,000: you say that you would inflict severe fines on these?—Yes; the danger of scab reappearing in a large flock is so much greater than in a small one, and for other reasons.

1932. The danger of scab is so great, do you not think you would order them to kill in that case?—If I had the power.

1933. Is there no discretionary power there?—No.

1934. If they do not clean, can you take the flock over?—It has never been done in my district; it was never necessary.

1935. There has been no flock in your district that has been scabby for any length of time?—No; Bainbridge's may have been on the list twice, but not more.

1936. Were Wilson's and Wright's?—No, not for any length of time.

1937. Then, you cannot account for scab being carried about?—No. Some of the owners, rather than hand their sheep over to the department, dip them and try to cure them themselves.

1938. There is one thing that may account for it probably—the character of the fencing: Is the kind of fencing used in Auckland different from that used in other parts?—It is bad fencing in my district—very imperfect in many places—in Marsden they have hardly a bit of fencing.

1939. That appears to me one important point: what is the kind of fence?—Posts and rails; the sheep can pass under it.

1940. And it has this disadvantage also that the wool gets caught in it?—Yes.

1941. Cannot the Inspector of the district enforce the provisions of the Act so that fences be kept in proper order?—Yes; he can compel an owner to keep his sheep upon his run.

1942. He can compel him to yard?—Yes; he can do that.

1943. Would not that compel him to keep his fences in proper order?—So I do, when necessary.

1944. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] The Macleans have informed me that they send their sheep for exportation in a cart.

1945. *Hon. the Chairman.*] So that they should not go along the road?—So that they do not go near the yards at all.

1946. Are the yards lime-washed?—Not unless scab has been found in them; in that case we can keep them without sheep for three months.

1947. Then, with regard to dipping, do people complain that they are obliged to dip sheep from a clean district?—I think it is quite unnecessary. I think it is a waste of money dipping in such cases where the sheep come from Gisborne or Napier. It is simply a loss of labour and money. Those are clean districts. But the other side—the West Coast—is infected. Coming from that side they should be dipped. There should be separate yards for sheep from Waitara. The greatest vigilance is required in respect to sheep coming from the West Coast. Infected sheep are brought from Wanganui and intermediate places to Hawera, from Hawera they are brought by rail to Waitara.

1948. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Sheep from the West Coast are driven four miles before they get to the dip; if they have scab they leave it on the road?—Yes.

1949. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Is not Taranaki a clean district?—Yes, I believe the sheep are clean there; but sheep come by rail to Waitara, where they are shipped to the Manukau. I think the Inspector of the subdivision which the sheep leave should give the certificate. The owner might not be able to make any declaration. The Inspector of the Hawera District should take the declaration of the owner.

1950. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] If it is necessary to dip sheep coming from any place, should not the dip be near where the sheep are landed: if they landed at Onehunga, and require dipping, the dip should be there?—Yes; it would be convenient.

1951. Where is the Government dip?—Two and a half miles from Auckland, and four miles from Onehunga.

1952. Should there not be a dip for each port—one at Onehunga as well?—Yes.

Mr. BELLIS, examined.

1953. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Where do you live?—At Te Nui.

1954. You wish to draw the attention of this Committee to some circumstances in the working of the Sheep Act: will you state what they are to the Committee?—What I complain of is this: In August, 1882, scab was declared to be in the river paddocks of the Mataikuna Run. The Mataikuna adjoins my property. I never received any notice of scab being there; but in April, 1883, Inspector Drummond found a strange sheep in one of my paddocks with a spot of scab, the same sheep belonging to the Mataikuna flock. Had I received notice that these sheep were infected I would have been prepared when the disease appeared among mine. I had called Inspector Drummond's attention to the Mataikuna Run, and considered that he ought to be there at the time they got their sheep in. But he declined to go, as he had not received instructions.

1955. Do you mean that he had not information that scab was in the flock?—I do not know; scab was in a portion of the flock.

1956. Was it not his duty to go?—I considered that it was his duty. I had no scab in my sheep for seven years. When he did inspect it was found to be a strange sheep belonging to an adjoining run, and not one of mine. I thought it his duty to go there, as their certificate was not cancelled, only for some portion of their flock. The reason that I called attention to the Mataikuna flocks was because they were mustering over my boundary. I do not believe they were inspected until after they were dipped. There were about fifteen hundred on the Mataikuna on the other side of the run from me, but the remaining part of the flock was not under the Act. When any sheep on a run is scabby the whole of the flock is declared to be infected.

1957. Then, the other sheep were not, as required to be by the Act, marked with S?—No; under the Act they were supposed to be branded, but they were not branded.

1958. Did you call the attention of the Inspector to that?—I called his attention at the time they were mustering. I said he ought to be there. The answer he gave me was that he had not received instructions.

1959. Was this scabby sheep which you found among yours branded with S?—No.

1960. Where could it have come from; from the scabby portion of the flock? Are they outside?—I contend that the whole flock must have been scabby. It must have gone through the scabby flock; it was not branded with S.

1961. Then, you say the Inspector, when he saw that sheep, must have known that it came direct from that flock on the Mataikuna Run, which was known to be scabby?—Decidedly.

1962. Did he take any steps to compel those other sheep to be mustered and branded for scab?—None whatever.

1963. You wish to draw attention to this case as an example of want of proper action on the part of the Inspector?—Yes; he refused to go. Some time after these sheep were inspected, and there was nothing found.

1964. Do I understand you to say that they picked out the scabby sheep before he went there?—I thought it his duty, when he knew the sheep were going to the yard, to be there.

1965. These sheep being mustered on your boundary: was this portion of the flock not branded with S supposed not to be scabby?—Yes.

1966. Anything further?—Yes; the Inspector, at the time he found that sheep among mine, failed to find out where it sprang from. He did not know whether it came from Mataikuna or from Castlepoint.

1967. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Was there no ear-mark?—I did not see. The scabby sheep that came among my sheep belonged to the Mataikuna. All these runs adjoining mine are large properties, comprising each from twenty to thirty thousand sheep. I think it was his duty to have called upon all these to muster their sheep. I think the spread of scab in the district was caused by this neglect.

1968. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What date was this?—Between August, 1882, and April, 1883. On account of that neglect I consider that I was a great sufferer. I was pulled up to Court and was fined 6d. a head. I applied for an adjournment of the case, but, by some means or other, the business was delayed.

1969. What was the information laid against you?—Failing to clean within nine months. The scab broke out in my flock in April. It was found that I got the material for dipping. I got tanks and other dipping material; in fact, I got everything necessary within the month. Then the bad weather set in. I suppose I was six weeks getting through one thousand sheep. I dipped three times. I intended to have got shorn. He asked me to get them shorn.

1970. Is your land fenced?—I fenced all about; a portion of it is very rough.

1971. You ought to have had no difficulty in mustering?—Portion of it is very rough indeed.

1972. Within the fence?—Yes.

1973. Do I understand you to say that you have rough country in your run?—Yes.

1973A. How much rough country have you?—About five or six hundred acres.

1974. Have you a certificate now?—No, I have not; but I expect to get one.

1975. You say you were “pulled up” and fined?—I knew nothing of the case going on. I was in Hawke’s Bay at the time. When I got home I found the warrant.

1976. Were you never served with a summons?—Yes; and after I was served I sent down a telegram.

1977. Did it not reach?—They told me they did not receive it until after the case was heard. Drummond also said that he never got my letter. He was not at home; he was at some race-meeting, or some other place.

1978. Did you think you would have a defence to the action?—Yes, I thought I should; and that the fine could have been reduced to half.

1979. Why were you fined 6d. a head?—The Inspector complained that I had not taken sufficient steps. I explained that it was impossible where my shed was; that I had only about seventy acres; that I had to cross a river, and could not possibly get the sheep up without slinging them; that it was impossible I could get them up until the weather became fine. The Resident Magistrate told me I ought to “bridge it” (the river) at a cost of £600 or £700.

1980. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Did you pay the fine?—Yes.

1981. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What was the name of the creek?—The Te Nui.

1982. What was the amount of the fine?—It cost me altogether between £27 and £29.

1983. Is there any other point you wish to draw attention to?—Had the Inspector compelled the adjoining runs to muster, I am certain he would have found scab there—in one in particular.

1984. You are speaking now of what you believe to be the case?—He did not take the sheep out and look at them. Also the adjoining flock to that property; these were people whose sheep were never inspected. I was unfortunate to have bad weather, and I got fined.

1985. Is not the Mataikuna Run clean now?—Yes; all the runs have a clean certificate barring Mr. Leverton.

1986. For the whole of their flocks?—Yes.

1987. Then, your neighbourhood is virtually clean?—No.

1988. What flocks are not clean?—Mr. Leverton’s, Mr. Andrew’s, and my own.

1989. There is Ica, but that is some distance?—It is only seven miles from Te Nui.

1990. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] You say the Inspector discovered a scabby sheep in your place?—Yes.

1991. When you examined it you saw that at the time as well as he did?—Yes.

1991A. And you told him that it belonged to a certain person?—Yes.

1992. Did you tell him to whom it belonged?—Yes..

1993. You say, then, that the Inspector did not give that person any notice to muster, and did not say anything about it?—No.

1994. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Were any of your own sheep at the same time scabby?—Yes; there was one, but nothing like the state that that was in.

1995. Did you inform the Inspector that you received no notice of scab on the adjoining runs?—Yes.

1996. Why did you not take action yourself: the Mataikuna flock was some seven miles from you?—It was not the flock that was declared infected, only a portion of the flock that was declared infected.

1997. Are there more shearing-places at Mataikuna than one?—No.

1998. All go through the same yards?—Yes.

1999. Are all managed from the one homestead?—Yes. I should state that it was impossible for a lamb to have got through. The lambs were docked: if this sheep had gone through the shed we must have seen it.

2000. How long did the Mataikuna remain infected after it lost the certificate?—I think it was twelve months.

2001. Was there any information laid against the proprietor?—No; he got them dipped, but the time was up, I think.

2002. *Captain Russell.*] You said that if the Inspector had chosen he might have followed up the information which you gave him where the scab was: the ear-mark would prove where it came from?—It proved that the sheep was on the adjoining run, but at the same time it came out of the clean portion of the flock.

2003. If you had the ear-mark that would be the proof?—Yes; but it had not the scab-brand.

2004. May there not have been some mistake in supposing it to have belonged to the Mataikuna Run?—No; it belonged to the flock that was supposed to be clean.

2005. Then, do you wish to say that the Inspector did not do his duty?—I think the Act was not worked as it should have been in this case. According to the Act, when a part of a flock is infected the whole should be declare infected.

2006. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] How long do you think this sheep in your flock?—It must have been there I should say about three months.

2007. Would that scabby sheep have imparted scab to the others?—Yes; no doubt the few of mine that were found with scab came from that sheep.

2008. Why do you say so?—Because the scab on the lamb was much older than it was on the other sheep in the yard.

2009. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Your sheep were in paddocks: how often do you see your sheep, for, if you had looked to your sheep, how could it happen that it was three months before you discovered this scabby sheep?—I had the whole of my sheep through the yard in the latter end of January.

2010. Did you not go amongst them in the paddock?—They were not in a paddock, they were on the run. Had the sheep gone through my shed it would have been shorn. I know that every

thing is shorn which goes through the dip. But this lamb had not been shorn until it had been through the dip.

2011. I think you said that you had a clean certificate up to that time?—Yes, for seven years. There was scab on the boundary of eight miles in a ring-fence, and I never got scab until just then.

2012. You say that you were not able to get a clean certificate because you could not muster all your sheep for dipping: might it not have been there at the time you were mustering your run for shearing?—I do not think so, for that one would have come with the others.

2013. You do not know how long it may have been in your place: when was it found?—In April. It was a scab which one might perhaps miss in the yard, particularly if you were not looking for it. There was no breaking of the wool.

2014. Does that portion of the Mataikuna Run which this scabby sheep came from adjoin your land?—No; it does not.

2015. What distance is it away?—I think it is four miles.

2016. You consider you ought to have had notice of that?—Yes, decidedly.

2017. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Is it a matter at all of frequent occurrence in your part for the Inspector to declare one portion of a flock infected and give a clean certificate over the remainder?—No; it is the first time I have heard of it.

2018. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] What has become of that sheep?—I got nothing by it.

2019. You did not send it back to its owner?—No.

2020. The owner did not say he was satisfied the sheep was his?—Drummond was satisfied that the sheep belonged to the Mataikuna Run. I consider that it was through this neglect that scab was caused to be in the district at the present time. Had it not been for that, I should be like the others and looked on to the boundaries, but none of us received notice.

2021. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you think that people ought to be compelled to dip once or twice a year until the disease is stamped out?—Yes; every flock should be dipped once a year.

2022. With lime and sulphur?—I think that lime and sulphur is the only practical cure for scab.

2023. Are you aware that other dips are used for killing ticks?—Yes.

2024. But they do not use lime and sulphur?—I think that every flock should be dipped with lime and sulphur at least once a year until the disease is stamped out.

FRIDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 1884.

Mr. DRUMMOND, examined.

2025. *The Chairman.*] You are Sheep Inspector in the Wairarapa, I believe?—Yes; the North Subdivision.

2026. Will you state to the Committee how the Act has been working there?—You mean since I took charge?

2027. Yes; when did you take charge: you were in South Wairarapa originally, I believe?—I was in South Wairarapa: I had charge of that subdivision; but I could not tell from memory when the change took place.

2028. Can you tell us about the date?—It is about three and a half years ago since I left South Wairarapa.

2029. You succeeded Mr. Sutton?—Yes. When the change took place Mr. Sutton was given the charge of the whole of the Wairarapa. Before that it was divided into two, as it is now: I had the South, and Mr. Telford the North Subdivision.

2030. There is no Chief Inspector?—No.

2031. You have no control beyond your own subdivision?—No; only over my own subdivision—the North Subdivision.

2032. Is there much scab now in that division?—No.

2033. Is it diminishing?—Yes; it has been diminishing since I have had charge of it. There are only three flocks now infected, and I have every reason to believe that two of these are really clean; I can see no scab upon them.

2034. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Which are those stations?—The Ica Station (Rev. J. C. Andrew's) and Mr. Berris's station.

2035. What is the station infected?—Liverton's station.

2036. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Liverton's is a small station, is it not?—Yes; there are only about four thousand sheep.

2037. Is it all fenced?—Yes; but it joins the Crown land, which is the most troublesome part of the Wairarapa.

2038. But, if his own land is fenced, would not that be sufficient?—No; the fence is always getting broken down. He keeps it well in order; but it is surrounded by Crown lands, on which there are wild pigs, cattle, and dogs. The wild dogs got into his ground, rushed up his sheep, and drove them through the fence. It was some little time before he got them altogether. When he did, they were all right till some months afterwards, when he found a wild ram very bad with scab. This excited his suspicions; he looked at his flock, and found scab just breaking out.

2039. He is killing sheep on the Government land, is he not?—Yes; Liverton and Cook have the contract.

2040. Do you think that they will get rid of the wild sheep in that way?—Yes, I think so; but it is a very hard matter. I think there are very few wild sheep about there now; but the country is so rough, it will take some considerable time before they can be got rid of. Liverton says he goes over the ground for weeks and weeks and thinks he has got rid of the sheep, when, to his great surprise, he finds one. But there are very few wild sheep there now.

2041. Do you not think that Mr. Liverton, being appointed for the purpose of killing these wild sheep, would take care at any rate to protect his own land, and be able to get a clean

certificate quickly: that, as he has the killing of the sheep on the Crown lands, he would naturally take care to kill all those in the neighbourhood, to keep his own boundary free?—Certainly.

2042. Is it not rather singular that he should still have scab there?—No; the wild dogs have rushed the sheep about. The dogs have been there all through this last winter.

2043. I should have thought that, as Mr Liverton is killing the sheep, if he had set to work to kill them thoroughly, he would have so completely cleared them out of his neighbourhood that there would be no danger to his own run?—He might have done so, but he says he had to work against his own plan. For instance; he wished to begin on the west side, and Mr. Sutton, he says, wished him to begin on the east, so as to prevent scab from spreading up in the direction of Hawke's Bay. In that way he thinks he has driven them nearer his own ground. His ground is something like the letter L in shape, and it is rather hard to explain the position to a person not knowing the nature of the country.

2044. You think that you are adopting the best way of getting rid of these sheep by employing Mr. Liverton?—I am sure of it.

2045. You think the best steps are being taken now?—I do.

2046. You are satisfied with these steps: you do not think anything further is necessary?—I cannot see anything at present. During the spare time that I have I am going over the ground with Mr. Liverton, and there seems to be every prospect of his giving great satisfaction.

2047. You expect to get rid of them shortly?—Yes; I think so. I think we should have done better if we had anything like a decent season; but last summer was almost like winter: it was the most troublesome season I ever recollect.

2048. Mr. Liverton was appointed on your recommendation?—Yes; it was on my recommendation; but he was appointed by Mr. Sutton.

2049. I wanted to know were any recommendations made in regard to the working of the Act in your district, and whether your recommendations have been attended to?—I think so.

2050. You have not been thwarted in any way or hampered?—No, not of late; but when I first had charge of South Wairarapa I was.

2051. In what way?—Well, I think Mr. Maunsell had more power than he ought to have had.

2052. And how did he hamper you?—In many a little way I could not say at the present moment.

2053. Do you remember scab breaking out in the river flock at Mataikuna?—Yes.

2054. About how many sheep were actually scabby in that flock?—It is rather taxing my memory to answer that now. It is two years ago or more; but I fancy it was about one thousand six hundred sheep.

2055. About how many sheep were there altogether?—I think from fourteen to sixteen thousand.

2056. Were all the fourteen or sixteen thousand sheep branded S?—Not at first; they were afterwards.

2057. But Mr. Bellis, I think, states that he had no notice of scab having broken out at Mataikuna in this river flock, and therefore he was not put upon his guard regarding his own boundaries. Subsequently a sheep bearing the Mataikuna ear-mark was found in his flock scabby?—Quite true.

2058. He further states that his flock was in that way scabbed, and that the sheep in question was not marked S?—No; it was not marked S.

2059. Can you account for that: how was it the other sheep being on the same run, they were not all marked S. I cannot account for it. Mr. Sutton was in charge at the time; but I will tell you how it occurred. I happened to be at Te Nui. I was doing some inspection at the time, and he and Liverton applied for a permit to remove some rams of Liverton's. Berris said, "There was no occasion, as the rams were to be dipped, and Mataikuna was not an infected run." I said, "It is;" and he replied, "I have received no notice." I said, "It is infected;" and he answered, "Oh, no; Mr. Sutton only cancelled the certificate for the river flock." I said, "There was some mistake there," and so there was. I saw his order to clean his sheep: it was for the river sheep only. In the quarterly returns afterwards the whole run appeared. The order to clean was for the river flock only. I saw the return.

2060. Was the river flock divided by natural boundaries from the other flocks so as to enable Mr. Sutton to make a distinction between the two flocks?—No; I do not think so: anyhow it is only a common seven-wired fence.

2061. Were these sheep still scabby when you took charge of that district?—Yes; there was scab over most of the run.

2062. Were these outside sheep branded S when you took charge of the station: the whole flock had been branded S before you took charge?—(No answer.)

2063. Did you give notice to the owner of Mataikuna to brand the whole of the sheep?—I feel certain I did. I saw some scab among his sheep. He said, that they were not scabby, and he had not had an order to clean them. Mr. Sheath was in charge.

2064. They were branded afterwards?—Yes; afterwards, at shearing-time. I took charge at shearing-time.

2065. Did you take any proceedings in consequence of the sheep not being branded S?—On Mataikuna?

2066. Yes?—No; you see I only took charge in August, and they sheared the sheep in October. I allowed them to shear the sheep, brand them, and dip them twice, which they did. The sheep were all shorn in October.

2067. And branded immediately after shearing?—Yes; most of them were branded before shearing—I think in September. I know that they had finished shearing, and, I think, had dipped them twice before the end of October.

2068. When Mr. Bellis told you that he had no knowledge that Mataikuna was scabby, did he say he had no notice to that effect?—Yes; he told me he had had no notice.

2069. Did you take any notice of that?—I informed Mr. Sutton of it: Mr. Sutton was in charge of the whole of the run. When I rode up to inspect these sheep I saw some sheep and I did not like the look of them. I spoke to Mrs. Berris, and said I did not like the look of them. On examining these sheep I found they were scabby. Mr. Berris had gone to Wainui, just in the Hawke's Bay Province, to bring some more sheep down. I wired to him what had happened, and told him he had better not bring any more sheep down. If he brought fresh sheep on to his run they might have tried to get back to their own country and spread the scab.

2070. Mr. Bellis failed to clean his sheep, I think, within the prescribed time?—Yes.

2071. And you summoned him?—I did.

2072. He was not present, I think, at the hearing of the case, and he was fined 6d. a head?—Sixpence a head on a thousand sheep out of fifteen hundred. I may, perhaps, explain that I gave him an order to clean about a thousand sheep; it was at the time I found the scab among them. There were some fresh sheep that he had made an arrangement with Mr. Maunsell to exchange. They numbered about fifteen hundred, so Mr. Wardell only fined him on the thousand ordered to be cleaned.

2073. Did not Mr. Bellis telegraph saying he was absent in Hawke's Bay and could not return in time to attend the summons, and he did not, therefore, ask for an adjournment?—Yes; but Mr. Wardell did not receive this telegram till about 3 o'clock in the afternoon or half-past, and I did not see Mr. Bellis's letter until I returned home in the evening.

2074. Why was a fine of 6d. a head inflicted and not 3d.?—Because it was shown that he did not take the proper steps, and I insisted upon his being fined the full amount. I asked him to shear his sheep early in the year so as to get at them and clean them; but he did not shear them, I think, till the end of December or the beginning of January, although he had only about a thousand or eleven hundred to shear altogether. That is why, it being such a bad case, Mr. Wardell fined him 6d. a head.

2075. A rehearing was applied for?—Yes; he then applied for a rehearing. After a time he got it, and he defended the case himself; but the evidence, according to the opinion of the public, did not seem to strengthen his case in any way, but rather to weaken it. The judgment was upheld, and Mr. Wardell fined him 5d. a head. He reduced the fine 1d., but the expenses would, I believe, come to more than double the difference.

2076. Mr. Wardell came to the conclusion that he was right in inflicting the fine?—Yes.

2077. I think you have summoned Mr. Cross, have you not, for driving fourteen sheep?—Yes; fourteen merino rams.

2078. The case came to Court?—Yes.

2079. What was the result?—It was dismissed.

2080. But you appealed, I believe?—I have appealed.

2081. He complains that the appeal is vexatious: would you state why you appealed?—The case was taken under the 46th section. Before driving his sheep across infected ground he should have got permission from the Inspector. He never applied for permission, and drove them across the infected Maraenanga Run.

2082. You say it was necessary to apply for a driving order?—Yes.

2083. On what grounds?—Under the 46th section.

2084. He had to go through infected country?—Yes.

2085. And he did not apply for a permit?—No; he applied for one for the other end of the run, but not for this end of the run. He was thinking about getting rams from quite an opposite direction. We had some conversation about these sheep. He was to get some sheep from Glenburn Station. Meanwhile these sheep were sold. Then he went in the opposite direction, by the coach, and got rams from there.

2086. Was not this represented at the trial?—Yes.

2087. Was it tried by a Resident Magistrate?—Yes; by Mr. Wardell.

2088. You think that the Resident Magistrate was right in coming to this decision?—Yes, I do. In summing up he said that I assisted to drive the sheep across the run and across the creek. That is false, because I was not on the run; I was in the river-bed. I admit I did help him to put them across the water.

2089. Have you any fresh evidence to produce?—I produced evidence to the Court at the time.

2090. Exactly, but my object in asking is this: If the Resident Magistrate decided upon the case, having all the evidence before him, what are the grounds of appeal at the present time?—The Resident Magistrate says he thinks my action was as good as giving permission.

2091. Of course you must recognize that all these cases are a very great expense to the person against whom they are brought; therefore, unless there are some very good grounds for a new trial, the appeal ought not to be applied for?—Yes; but perhaps I had better tell the story from the beginning, and the Committee will then be in a position to judge for themselves. I may state that it was in the autumn—I think it was in March. I was very busy inspecting sheep at that time of the year at Mataikuna. When I arrived there early in the morning to inspect some sheep I found that there were none ready for me. I waited at the station; the manager and all the shepherds were out. During the day a pedlar came along, and he told me he had seen Mr. Cross and another man, and what had happened at Ohunga—what trouble he had had to cross the sheep, and how he had lost some of them. He also told me that Mr. Cross was coming down with them. I said, "Are you certain he is coming down? It is a strange thing he has never applied to me for a permit." I also said, "What a stupid man;" and that I should have to lay an information. The man said, "I hope I have not done him any harm." I said, "No; that I should have seen them in any case." I also asked him where Mr. Cross was; and he said, "He is between Ohunga and here." I replied, "It is too late now; the damage is done." I also said, that I expected the sheep in every

minute, and that I could not get away or do anything. Mr. Cross did not turn up that day, having changed his mind and stayed at the accommodation-house. Next day he came along and arrived about the forenoon. I was busy inspecting sheep in the Mataikuna yards. It seemed he had learned by some means I was there, but I do not know how. I saw him coming close to the river while I was in the yard. He drove his sheep down in the river-bed, and then sang out to inform me at the yards. We were within speaking distance; but, to get across to where he was, I had to go some little distance round. I called out to him, "I will be down in a few minutes; I cannot leave just at present." Mr. Sheath told me that Mr. Cross wanted me. I said, "What does he want with me? I cannot help now in the matter; it is too late." Mr. Sheath said, "I do not know; he wants you to come down to see his sheep." I said, "I will come down; but I don't see what good I can do." After a few minutes I went across the river to him and spoke to him. I told him that he had done wrong. He said, "I don't see what harm I have done." I replied, "I can show you in the Act what you have done." He took the thing more as a joke than anything else. We stayed at Mataikuna Station that evening, and I mentioned the matter two or three times to him; but he treated the whole thing as a joke. Next morning early I was going to assist the Mataikuna people to muster the sheep. I spoke to him and said, "When you pass Te Nui ask the constable to let you know when the information arrives, so as to save the expense of serving it." That is a common thing for me to do, to save expense so far as I can. He said, "Do you mean to lay an information against me?" and I said, "Certainly; I cannot help it." "Well," he said, "I think it is very hard on me; what harm have I done?" I replied, "I don't say you have done so very much harm, but you have no right to drive through an infected run without the permission of the Inspector, and 'go for you' I must." He replied, "If that is the case, I will fight you." What he meant by "fighting" was that he would obtain the best advice and defend the case. It was proved in Court that I was not in the Mataikuna Run, but I admitted I was in the river-bed. The tide was out, so that it was quite low. When the tide was in the place where the sheep stood would have been covered with water. I said to him, after looking at the sheep, "What have you been doing; have you been taking them across?" He tried to drive the sheep, and I helped him in a friendly sort of way in trying to push them into the river. The Mataikuna is rather wide there. I said, "There is a narrower place about a chain lower down." He took the rams there; and I gave one ram a push to help him. The Resident Magistrate held that my action was as good as giving permission to allow him to drive the sheep through the run. That is the whole thing. This was on the 6th June last, and the appeal has only just gone in. We had some trouble to get the Magistrate to allow it to pass. I think if you were to see the evidence and the Magistrate's remarks it would alter your minds in regard to the case. I stuck out he had done wrong; but, because I happened to give a ram a push into the creek, the Resident Magistrate said I helped to drive the sheep into the river. I admitted that I did so in a friendly way. I was not on the run, and had not been for days before; nor was I on it for days after. That is the whole case. I think I have very good ground for appeal.

2092. Before whom did that appeal come?—Of course it has to be referred back to the Resident Magistrate for his remarks, and then it goes to the Supreme Court or to the Court of Appeal, and it is now resting there. I think the Magistrate will not alter his decision; I think it will have to be sent back to him again to insist upon his doing so.

2093. Understand my remarks are not made at all on your action against Mr. Cross. In the first instance, I think you were perfectly right in summoning him. It seems to me, however, that probably considerable hardship may fall upon settlers through being put to considerable expense through cases being taken to the Court of Appeal?—I quite understand you in the matter, and I do not do so in every case.

2094. I have nothing more to say about that; I think probably you have explained it to the Committee to their satisfaction?—I assure you that in every case that I have had I have told people what I have had to do, and that, in order to save expense, they had better accept service of the summons, because in some cases the constable has to travel many miles to serve the summons, and I have told them they had better arrange with the constable to meet them at a certain time to save the expense of the service. I must say I will stick to the Act; if they break it, I will go for them. There are some cases in which I should like to take proceedings, but I know they are weak, and I feel sure it is no good to take them before the Resident Magistrate.

2095. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Had you legal advice at the Court?—I had.

2096. And was it on the legal adviser's advice that you appealed?—Certainly. He asked me at the time if he should appeal, and I said, "Decidedly." I thought I had a very strong case. We gave notice at the time, and went back to the solicitor's office and talked it over.

2097. He advised you to appeal?—Certainly, very strongly. I would not go against his advice. Mr. Bunny was the solicitor, and it was at his advice that the appeal was taken.

2098. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you seen a petition which was forwarded by Mr. Edwin Meredith to the Governor?—No; I have not. Is it Mr. Meredith junior or senior?

2099. I think it is the junior. The petition says that on the 2nd June, 1884, he was summoned under section 29 of the Sheep Act for removing sheep through the run without permission?—I thought you said it was to the Governor; I suppose it is to the Government. No; I have not seen that.

2100. It is to the Governor, and it is from Edwin Meredith the younger. I was going to ask you a question about that, as the case has been referred to and we have heard one side of the case, and as it is considered you should have an opportunity to reply to it. He says he was summoned under section 29 on the 2nd June, 1884, for moving sheep without a permit?—Yes.

2101. He says at that time he held a clean certificate?—Yes, he did.

2102. And that he was requested by you to dip the whole of his flock, I suppose previously to that?—Messrs. Meredith were very anxious that all the neighbours round should join them in dipping. Knowing it was a very good thing, I put myself to some trouble and arranged that they should dip altogether. It was at their request and at the request of the neighbours that I did so.

2103. Mr. Meredith did dip, I believe?—Yes.

2104. The others did not, I believe?—The others did dip—Mr. Moore, I think, and Mr. Hitchens did, but others did not.

2105. Inspector Valance superintended the dipping?—No; he happened to arrive at the station when they were dipping. He says he may have been there at the time, but he did not supervise the dipping. The Waironga Station people owned some of the sheep. Inspector Valance came up to Adams Peak. There was a flock of ewes, but there were a few wethers. They picked out these, and some of those might have been there.

2106. He held a clean certificate for these sheep at the time?—Yes.

2107. What was your objection to giving a permit for moving them?—Because they had not been inspected and dipped under section 29.

2108. Then, a portion of the run was infected?—No; you see they had a clean certificate, but three months after obtaining the certificate they must be dipped.

2109. Then, a permit was absolutely necessary?—Yes, certainly.

2110. You refused to give him a certificate on the ground that he had not applied under section 29?—He never applied to me for a permit. I met the sheep, inspected them, asked for the permit, and laid an information straight.

2111. He states in the petition that Inspector Valance superintended the dipping of a portion of the sheep. They had made application for a permit to move them, but apparently had not obtained a certificate?—No; that is false. There were some other sheep inspected to go away, but we knew nothing about these going away.

2112. This was a permit to move sheep from Waironga to the Riversdale Run he applied for?—No; there were sheep to be moved from the Riversdale Run, but he did not apply for it. They were removed from the Riversdale yards.

2113. Did Mr. Meredith apply for a permit to remove sheep to the Waironga Station from the Riversdale Run?—Yes; he has done so.

2114. Was that permit granted?—Yes. I think before that occasion there were two flocks, and both were granted permits. That was after I took charge. There was one lot that I sent Valance down to see. They were dipped at Waironga and taken off. Another lot were dipped at Riversdale.

2115. There seems to be some confusion about this?—I am certain it is as I have stated. Knight went down and brought them up.

2116. Did you order Mr. Meredith to brand those sheep with the S?—Yes; that was before I went to the Court.

2117. He declined to do so?—Yes; and I took him to Court.

2118. What was the result?—The case was dismissed.

2119. And did you give a permit afterwards?—Afterwards I had to do so.

2120. On what ground was the case dismissed?—On the ground that it was proved in Court to be a separate run. Indeed, I may say, Mr. Sutton went dead against me. I cancelled the certificate of all the sheep that I considered Mr. Meredith owned—that is, including both properties, Waironga and Riversdale—and gave instructions to have all these sheep branded S. I saw most of them branded before I left, except the Waironga sheep, which I did not see. It was some little time before I went down there again. I then saw some of the sheep were not branded, and then gave him fresh notice. I said that I should be back on such and such a day; if those sheep were not branded, or if I was not satisfied with the steps taken, that I should lay a fresh information. This I did. They had Mr. Sutton as a witness, and he said that he did not include the Waironga sheep in his quarterly returns.

2121. You mean as infected?—Yes. He had only included the Riversdale Run. I considered it was all one homestead; but they proved to the satisfaction of the Resident Magistrate that they were two runs.

2122. That is the ground on which the case was dismissed—that it was a separate run?—Yes. At the time Mr. Sutton said he did not include it, I asked Mr. Bunny to ask him how he got the notice, and he said he might have put it down in mistake. That is how we were floored. Mr. Sutton had charge of the district at the time.

2123. Then, you say you had to give a permit?—Yes; and I did so.

2124. Did you see these sheep dipped?—Yes; I sent down Inspector Valance to see them dipped.

2125. And he signed the permit?—No; I signed it.

2126. What are the terms of the permit?—I told you how it was arranged: he had to go through the infected run.

2127. I do not want to press you unfairly. Under what section is it?—The 29th section.

2128. He states that the permit was filled up by Inspector Valance, and sent by your knowledge; and that the permit consists of a declaration that you had actually seen those sheep dipped to your own satisfaction?—I may explain that matter. In the 46th section it says, "The Inspector in charge," and I thought the two would do for one. We have no other forms. They had to travel through Riversdale to Kohiawai, which are infected runs.

2129. I only want to draw your attention to this point: You say that statement was correct, and that you signed the forms?—Yes; at the same time I saw the sheep several times before this. The only thing is, I did not see them dipped.

2130. You think you were right in signing the permit you did?—I think so, under the 46th section, combining the two together; that is why I did combine them.

2131. You refused a clean certificate to Mr. Meredith on account of certain sheep at Riversdale, I think, and when you inspected them you could not detect any scab in them, but you withheld your certificate: is that so?—I do not think so.

2132. Do you remember examining his sheep at Riversdale on the 8th October, 1883?—Yes.

2133. You supervised some dipping after shearing?—Yes.

2134. Did you give a certificate then?—No.

2135. He asked you to give a certificate?—I have no recollection of it.

2136. He states that you refused to give a certificate until three months after dipping, but you promised to go over and examine the sheep on the 21st January, 1884?—I have no recollection whatever of that.

2137. Did you go there on the 26th January?—I have been there a number of times.

2138. Do you recollect examining two thousand sheep there, and not being able to find any scab?—No; I think that when I examined the sheep at Riversdale I went through the whole of them both times.

2139. The statement is this: that, when you had gone through two thousand and could find no scab, you ordered him to brand these two thousand with the letter S. He declined on the ground that it was not fair, because the whole flock was clean; and he refused to brand them unless some were found scabby among the remainder of the flock. You threatened to summon him, he says; and then, on the 15th February, you returned and examined the sheep, but did not find any scab, and you granted a certificate?—I think it was that date; but I believe the two thousand sheep were at Waironga.

2140. He states it was Riversdale, but there is so much confusion about the flocks that it is difficult to ascertain what are the facts. I merely draw your attention to the statement, because there was an expression of opinion that as one side had been stated the other side should be heard. Mr. Meredith complained that, although you could not find scab in the flock, you refused to give a clean certificate: that refers to Beaumaris; that is another flock?—Yes; that is R. R. Meredith's.

2141. Was that so?—I examined the sheep twelve months ago last winter. I found them lousy. He did ask me for a clean certificate. I said, "How can I give you a clean certificate when your sheep are infected with lice? You dip them and I will give it." The sheep were then under Mr. Sutton's charge. I said, "I do not think I can give it to you without Mr. Sutton's authority; I will not do so, at any rate."

2142. Then, you are not responsible?—I was not responsible when I inspected the sheep of R. R. Meredith.

2143. Did you declare that the sheep were not clean and put them into the *Gazette*?—No.

2144. Then, if the sheep were scabby you would have declared them so?—Certainly; and given him an order to clean them. I would not declare them infected. Mr. Sutton, then being in charge, would give notice in the paper.

2145. Then, you left them in that position: they were neither clean nor were they scabby?—No; he held a clean certificate.

2146. Then, why did he ask for a clean certificate?—Because he wanted a fresh one. He tells me he has fifteen certificates altogether.

2147. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Some from Hawke's Bay?—Yes; he is always selling.

2148. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you think it was right to withhold the certificate because you did not consider the flock clean, and yet not declare it infected?—Well, there is so much lice about, and he promised to give them a dipping.

2149. Was this the only lousy flock in the neighbourhood?—No; I am sorry to say most of the Wairarapa flocks are lousy.

2150. Do you treat them all in the same way?—Yes; I told them to dip the sheep. It was in the winter-time, and Mr. Meredith promised to have a dip put up. He has not done so to this day.

2151. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Although he is alongside a scabby run?—Yes.

2152. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you not compelled him to dip?—No; because his sheep have not been infected with scab for some three or four years. It was on the infected list when Mr. Sutton took charge.

2153. It is beyond my comprehension; it is a mixed-up affair?—Yes; it puzzles me.

2154. What I wanted to know is this: In carrying out the Act, do you enforce the law in every way the same in respect to every one?—I do. If I saw a man with infected sheep, and he would not take steps to clean them, I should certainly be inclined to go for him.

2155. Have you, for instance, in any case not laid an information when you knew of a breach of the Act?—I do not know that I have, if I knew that I had a good case. I certainly have seen some doubtful ones, that I could not prove.

2156. You spoke of Mr. Sutton having given evidence to show that this flock—Waironga, I think it was—was a separate flock, and was so treated, and so you lost your case?—Yes.

2157. Take the Ica Run, how does that stand?—They want to make out separate flocks there.

2158. Have you not made them separate flocks?—No.

2159. Did they not hold a clean certificate for a portion of their flocks?—No.

2160. Surely we have evidence to that effect. It was stated, I think, by one of the Messrs. Meredith that only a portion of the flock was proved to be actually scabby in the first instance, but they were all running on the same run, and were all held to be scabby, and that then the division took place. The Ica Run, you say, is treated as two?—No; not now. I will tell you how to clear the case up. Mr. Willie Andrew, Mr. Andrew's son, came up on the station. I had heard that the old gentleman intended to give him a portion of the run, to try him, and see how he would shape. He had been a surveyor. Mr. Andrew, sen., did make over a portion of this run to him, and I thought it was really a *bona fide* run. He put up yards, erected a dip, put up a cottage for the son to live in, and had two men living there, and there was every appearance of a separate run. I gave a certificate to him, thinking it was a separate run. He signed a declaration that they were his sheep, and under his charge. Soon after I gave him the clean certificate he sold most of those sheep to Mr. R. Meredith, some of them were given over to the father, and I think about one hundred and fifty or one hundred and seventy were left on the run; and Mr. Andrew told me that it was very likely he would re-purchase these sheep back from his son, and take them all to the run,

and very likely the son would surrender the lease. There was nothing to prevent him from doing that. I said, "No; if you do that I will not grant a certificate until I grant it for the whole of the run." Young Mr. Andrew did surrender his lease, and sold his sheep back. Then the old gentleman instructed some more sheep to be put on this run, and they became infected. He now says he has sold these sheep to his son, and wants a clean certificate. I will not grant him a second one. I said, "I was certainly under the impression that it was a separate run, but now I will not grant you a certificate, as the run now is all alike."

2161. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Are you, then, of opinion that these sales or leases have only been made for the purpose of selling sheep?—Certainly; as a way to get over the Act, and for nothing else. I told them so.

2162. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] In the case in which you summoned Meredith the case was dismissed: that was for Waironga?—Yes.

2163. Were you of opinion that you were right?—I was.

2164. You did not appeal?—No; I did not think I had a strong enough case.

2165. They are rather a terror, I suppose, these people?—By Jove, they are a terror. It would have been right enough if I had got Mr. Sutton to go straight, but Mr. Sutton went crooked. I suppose it suited his purpose.

2166. *Hon. the Chairman.*] There was one other question I wanted to draw your attention to, that was with regard to passing sheep from one subdivision of a district to another subdivision. It has been stated that Mr. Orbell has objected to the sheep passing, as if they were passing from one district into another district: is that so? Are you aware of any case in which Mr. Orbell has improperly tried to stop the passage of sheep from one subdivision to another subdivision?—I think there was a dispute at Te Oreore bridge about some sheep. As far as I know, I do not think he did actually stop them.

2167. In your opinion, was the action taken by Mr. Orbell beyond the law?—I think perhaps Mr. Orbell stepped a little over the mark. I do not think he actually stopped the sheep.

2168. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Have you been in charge of any other district than the one you have at present?—I have not been in charge of any other district, but I have been in charge of a subdivision. In the old days I had first charge of the North Wairarapa Subdivision, then, afterwards it was changed, I had charge of the South. I cleaned that. Mr. Sutton was sent up, and a change took place.

2169. That is, you cleaned a subdivision of the Wairarapa District?—I did.

2170. How long, approximately, had that subdivision been scabby prior to your taking charge?—South Wairarapa?

2171. Yes?—I think ever since it was Wairarapa.

2172. How many years?—I suppose it must have been thirty years, if not more; I think over thirty years.

2173. Looking over the *Gazette* I find that one station, called Riversdale, with slight intervals apparently, was continuously scabby from the 30th September, 1879, to the 31st December, 1883: whose run is that?—That is Edwin Meredith junior's. It is known as his now. It belonged to Mr. Meredith, sen., but it is cut into four runs now.

2174. This Mr. Meredith is the one who has sent the petition that has been the subject of discussion here?—I believe it is.

2175. Can you tell the Committee how it is that this run appears to have been almost continuously scabby for such a long time? Are there any insuperable natural difficulties, or any other difficulties, that should cause it to be continuously scabby?—The only way in which I can account for it is through bad management. It is an easy run, and I could soon clean it for them.

2176. How long do you think has that run been scabby?—It has been so for many years. They have had clean certificates on several occasions; but I should think that during twenty years or more they have had scab on that run. Of course they have had certificates at different times.

2177. Yes; and changes have taken place as to ownership and as to occupation by way of leasing?—Yes.

2178. As between the separate members of the family—similar to what you have been describing as having taken place in the case of Mr. Andrew?—Yes; in the same way.

2179. Is this run now clean?—Yes, it is.

2180. Do you believe it is in reality clean?—I do; I certainly should not grant a certificate if I was not satisfied. I am perfectly satisfied now.

2181. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Is there anything further you wish to mention in connection with the working of the Act?—I believe there is a feeling against me, because people say I am too severe with them. They say I am too sharp—too smart. I reply, "If you can read the Act in any other way, the Resident Magistrate and I must be radically wrong."

2182. You think the Act works well if carried out properly?—I think so; but there is no doubt it would be more satisfactory if it were amended.

2183. In what direction?—Several of the sections want altering, some of them are rather confusing. There are some of the sections regarding which I do not think you would get two men to agree as to the meaning.

2184. You are not prepared to suggest any amendment to the Committee?—No, I am not now; some time ago I was.

TUESDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. BAYLY examined.

2186. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are Chief Inspector under the Sheep Act?—Superintending Inspector under the Sheep and Rabbit Acts.

2187. Have you held that position since the Acts came into operation?—Allow me to hand in my letter of appointment. [Letter put in.]

2188. Who held the position before?—I was the first under these Acts.

2189. Will you explain to the Committee your position in regard to the working of the Acts?—I cannot deviate from the evidence given at an inquiry held two years ago in the case of Telford. There my position was thoroughly defined. I beg to hand in a copy of the evidence taken. [Evidence handed in.]

2190. We want to come to this—information with regard to your duties: have you the control and management of the whole department under the Act in your hands?—No.

2191. Will you state in what particulars it is not under your control?—My position has always been as it is there described. The name Superintending Inspector very nearly explains it. I am interested with details and outside work, to see that the officers perform their duties; if anything comes under my knowledge that requires alteration, or anything of that description, I deem it my duty to forward a report to the Colonial Secretary, who goes through it. I am not in sole charge, nor do I consider myself solely responsible for the whole working of the department.

2192. In cases such as you have mentioned you forward a report of these matters to the Colonial Secretary, and you consider that you are simply the person through whose hands that report passes: do you take any instructions as to reply, or the course you are to adopt?—Scarcely without exception. All my reports dealing with matters of that description will be found on reference to official records; they are nearly invariably passed or memorandumped by Mr. Cooper.

2193. Then, you do not consider yourself responsible for the action that is taken in carrying out the Act?—Not wholly.

2194. Only in matters of detail?—It is a somewhat bastard position. I cannot say exactly what position I occupy—I have never had an office in the building—especially since the definition of my position given at that inquiry. I have always considered myself somewhat insecure. It is, I consider, a bastard position, and not compatible with that which such an officer should occupy.

2195. With regard to the appointment of the officers under you?—I have the recommendation of the officers as a rule. The system of appointments is this: Applications for appointments are filed. Each application invariably brings with it recommendations from persons who are known. These recommendations are considered, and the appointment is filled when a vacancy occurs. It is taken into consideration according to the seniority of the application. That is the general rule. Special cases may arise where the applicant is considered to be specially fitted to fill the office.

2196. These applications pass through your hands: do you examine the recommendations, and ascertain the character of the applicant as to whether he is a proper person, and equal to the work?—Invariably, if it is an Inspector's appointment. But, let me ask, am I now answering in reference to both Acts, or only to one?

2197. Confine yourself to the Sheep Act for the present?—So far as the Sheep Inspectors are concerned, I invariably examine into the qualifications of the man who seeks the appointment, to see whether he is qualified or not.

2198. Are your recommendations generally accepted?—They have been—specially since I have held the position I occupy at present—I think I might say so. I do not recollect a case to the contrary.

2199. You satisfy yourself that the appointment about to be made is a good one?—Yes.

2200. Are you satisfied that every appointment has been a good one?—All, with the exception of one. In the case of that one I called upon him to resign, when I found he was no longer a desirable man; and he was appointed under peculiar circumstances, and required a man of peculiar adaptability to carry out the duties.

2201. In the case of the Inspectors you have recommended, have they all been appointed since 1881: have none been appointed upon outside recommendations, which have not come through your hands?—None since 1881. I do not recollect any since 1881, as far as Inspectors are concerned.

2202. Do you consider that the department as it now stands in regard to the different districts is sufficiently supplied with Inspectors?—So far as Sheep Inspectors are concerned, there are one or two districts that are over-supplied, that is, supposing the disease stamped out. But for the necessity which still exists for stamping out the disease, I do not think they are over-manned at present.

2203. Then, so long as disease exists in these districts, it will be necessary to keep up an extra staff?—Yes; but I do not think that should be for a period much longer than six months, for these districts are nearly clean.

2204. You think they are all but clean?—Decidedly. Beginning at the north, there are five districts, Auckland, Wanganui, Wairarapa, Nelson, and Marlborough. Beginning with Auckland, I observe that there are no less than eight officers in that district. Poverty Bay is in the Hawke's Bay District, so that it is outside the Auckland District.

2204A. There are about six hundred scabby sheep in Auckland?—Yes; it has been the case for the last two years. Sometimes there appears to be but very few scabby sheep, but scab breaks out again.

2205. Can you account for it; it looks as if there were neglect of some kind?—I look upon it as bad management in some way. Sometime ago I recommended that the Government should hold an inquiry into the manner in which the department is carried on in Auckland.

2205A. Are you satisfied with it?—Decidedly not.

2206. You say that sometime since you recommended the Government to make inquiry: was that attended to?—No; it was not.

2207. Are you aware why not?—I cannot exactly say, but it was just at a time before the last dissolution of Parliament, and it could not be done at that time.

2208. It was quite lately, then, that you made that recommendation—only a few months ago?—Yes; I thought I had the papers on the subject with me, but I find that I have not. It would be about three or four months ago. I think I was in Auckland in June or July; it was somewhere about that time.

2209. Since the present Government came into office, have you recommended that?—I have had no opportunity as yet.

2210. I do not understand you?—I have been laid up for three weeks.

2211. Will you say in what respect you are dissatisfied with the working of the Sheep Act in Auckland?—There the flocks are so small, but there are a great many of them, and they require constant watching. I have travelled over the country myself, and I think, if the Act were carried out by proper officers in a proper manner, there is no reason why the district should not be cleaned, especially when the reason assigned for the frequent breaking-out of scab is that it occurs through diseased sheep from Wanganui. That was a good reason very often, but it has passed away. It is true that for several years Wanganui was a *dépôt* for scab, but that is so no longer.

2212. I suppose that every sheep introduced by sea would be inspected?—Yes; but I found that steamers were carrying Government brands, and used to brand the sheep themselves in transit.

2213. What, do you mean private steamers?—Yes; private steamers.

2214. How?—They were supplied with them.

2214A. Who supplied them?—They supplied themselves.

2215. Did you take steps to stop it?—I did. I found it out by accident. Sheep were taken up to Auckland from Waitara.

2216. But they ought to be clean on leaving Waitara, for Taranaki has been clean?—These were Wanganui sheep.

2217. Do I understand you that they were branded after they got aboard the vessel. How did they get there, let me ask you first?—By railway from Hawera. I think you will find that at that time it was part of the same district. At the present time there is an Inspector placed at Waitara. He was removed to that place from New Plymouth. He was instructed to see that the Act was properly carried out.

2218. In coming from Wanganui they came from an infected district into a clean district?—I think it will be found that Taranaki was infected for a long, long time, and still is infected.

2218A. I am speaking as to the present time?—It is still allowed to be an infected district; if it were declared a clean district that would simply stop the whole of the trade with Auckland.

2218B. As far as I can see from the reports Taranaki is a clean district?—It used to be a portion of the Wellington District.

2219. There are no infected sheep in the New Plymouth District?—Only since 1881 or 1880—the beginning of 1881.

2220. I am speaking of the present time: I was asking you what happens?—The sheep are taken through; they are inspected by an Inspector; every sheep is inspected and branded before going to Auckland.

2221. What are the steps taken?—I believe they are inspected in Wanganui, and their departure telegraphed to the Waitara Inspector.

2222. They are not dipped?—No.

2223. But going from an infected district they are bound to be dipped?—Certainly; at Auckland, on arrival; but it would stop the whole, or a greater portion, of the mutton supply to Auckland were they dipped before shipment. In sheep going through by rail there would not be the danger of infecting sheep passing along the road, but the trucks, I suppose, would be likely to introduce scab. Since an Inspector has been placed at Waitara there has been a close supervision.

2224. But to return to the Auckland District. You seem to think that scab was introduced from Wanganui. That is now not the case?—I am positively certain that it does not go through now.

2225. How do you account for the continuance of scab in Auckland, which has had more inspection than other places?—I can find no reason for it, except that matters are not properly conducted there. In one quarter we see a number of flocks, in the next quarter there are different flocks.

2226. That will apply not only to Auckland but to Marsden and other subdivisions?—In Marsden great alterations have been made since the present Inspector was placed at Whangarei. I think the disease has been almost stamped out there.

2227. The evidence we had yesterday went to show that the flocks are very small—not exceeding from fifty to one hundred sheep; that these sheep are easily cleaned; but the curious thing about it is that, within a month or two afterwards, in some other flock of about the same size, scab will break out as if coming from a distance away?—It must be admitted that a lot of the Auckland country is difficult. Where there is a number of these small holders the difficulty is great. The country is very rough in some places, and some places are very difficult of access, which is very often only by water. The flocks vary from ten to two hundred sheep. Constant supervision is necessary, and it takes a good deal of time to travel the distances. These small owners have an opportunity of moving their sheep backwards and forwards by water, so that they escape observation.

2228. You mean that they can move their sheep without giving notice or getting any leave to move?—Yes; it would require a tremendous service to meet all these contingencies. That is one of the reasons why scab frequently breaks out in those isolated places.

2229. Do you not think that, in carrying out the Act as it stands, you could stamp it out?—The only thing necessary is constant and close supervision. I think that, under the Act as it stands, it might be stamped out in Auckland.

2230. What are your instructions: to carry out the Act strictly, or to use discretion in any way?—There are the instructions at the end of the Act.

2231. Perhaps you can state what they are?—They are to carry out the Act.

2232. In its integrity?—Yes. Allow me to hand in the circular to Inspectors, dated the 18th September, 1883. [Circular put in and read.]

2233. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.* What document is that?—The circular sent by me to the Inspectors.

2234. *Hon. the Chairman.* I gather from this that you intended the Inspectors should lay informations whenever there were any breaches of the Act?—Yes.

2235. Are you satisfied that the Inspectors have done so?—I have heard of nothing to the contrary—nothing to the contrary has come to my knowledge.

2236. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] But you do not think they have done so?—I imagine it has not been done in all cases; there is no particular case that I can mention.

2237. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What is your opinion as to its having been done or not?—I do not know of any instance where it has not been done.

2238. We have evidence that the Inspector in Auckland allows a ram to run with small flocks because, as he states it, he considers there is no danger of the infection spreading, but in large flocks he thinks it would be quite wrong for a ram so to run with them. He mentioned that he considered he had a certain amount of discretion in a matter of that sort. Do you consider that was a right view of the case?—It was a decidedly wrong view of the case.

2239. Do you think that allowing rams to run with these small flocks in this way may be one cause why scab continues to exist?—Yes; because the infected ram may be bought by a neighbour, and the flock he comes out of is not known to the Inspector until after he has gone.

2240. If the farmer were to breed from his ewes, do you think he would take the same trouble as if they were not allowed to breed?—I do not think he would; it is, in fact, against the law.

2241. There are instances?—I do not know whether breeding rams would not be better, but, if a man is precluded from putting in his rams, he can, in any event, put in foreign stock. It is admitted that lambs are difficult to muster, and consequently may retard operations in cleaning a station. But, on the other hand, we have several instances where sheep brought on an infected station, having taken the infection, have scabbed a large area of country in endeavouring to make back to where they were brought from. It is, therefore, questionable which of the two evils is the greater. Auckland is a specially dangerous country,

2242. May that arise from the nature of the fencing?—Yes, it is so; but Auckland is a peculiar place in itself.

2243. Posts and rails are what they use?—Yes; besides it is a humid climate, and scab will exist there longer.

2244. What do you suggest in regard to the cure of scab in Auckland?—I think the first thing is that an inquiry should be held.

2245. You would trust to that inquiry to point out what should be done as regards the management?—Yes.

2246. *Hon. the Chairman.*] With regard to Wanganui, was not that place clean about three years ago?—It was reported clean, but it was found to the contrary. One Inspector was dismissed through what was the actual state of the district; another was removed.

2247. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] What man is that?—*Mr. McKenzie* was removed.

2248. He is just walking about the street here?—He is employed here to watch the dipping of sheep.

2249. In Wellington?—Yes; he is quite fit for that: he receives £200 a year.

2250. He is a perfectly competent man?—There was no charge made against him: he was not charged with inefficiency.

2251. *Mr. Richardson.*] He has charge of a district: he was in Wairarapa?—He was in Wellington. I moved him to Wanganui. He was holding the same position except that he had a larger district. There used to be also a sort of cadet, so that when he was in the country some one would be looking after the port.

2252. Has he improved the state of things in Wanganui?—He has stamped it out, with the exception of one or two places outside.

2253. With regard to the work done by Inspectors you must, to a certain extent, judge by results?—Yes, by results. They have their diaries, which are presumed to contain an actual statement of the work done.

2254. Do you think that he is thoroughly competent and has done his work thoroughly well since he has been in Wanganui?—I am perfectly satisfied.

2255. You are satisfied, perfectly: do you think that district will soon be clean?—I hope that, by the end of the quarter, if not perfectly clean, there will not be a scabby sheep to be seen throughout the district. The whole district has been worked systematically, and inspected from end to end. Owing to this systematic treatment, although I cannot say it is perfectly clean, yet I am positive it has been stamped out as far as that treatment has gone.

2256. Do you require the Inspectors to visit the flocks?—Yes; it is my instructions that they shall inspect every flock: that they do not wait until scab breaks out, but that they shall visit every flock in their district regularly.

2257. Are these regulations in force now?—They are, I suppose; they have always been in force.

2258. Take this one—18: "It is the first and most important duty of an Inspector to detect the existence of scab on its first outbreak: he should keep a systematic system of inspection in his district." Has that been carried out?—My distinct instructions have been that that should be carried out vigilantly.

2258A. With regard to Wairarapa, there has been a large increase of scab in that district?—Yes; I cannot exactly say how long since, but it is within eighteen months.

2259. How do you account for it: the fact of there being scab there which was not known—the Inspector was not aware of its existence—where did it exist?—It existed in *Mr. Meredith's* flocks, for one place; I know that for a fact. If you wish I will detail the circumstances. I shall have to go into other matters in explaining. Shortly after taking charge—*Mr. Sutton* was in charge of the South Wairarapa Subdivision—there were continual complaints made that the Act was not administered in the manner that it should be. These complaints were coming down to me without any specific charge against the Inspector. Especially on one occasion there were three or four of

these complaints came down at one time. In consequence of this I wrote to Mr. Sutton to the effect that charges had been made that the administration of the Sheep Act was not conducted in the manner it should be; that he was to hold himself disengaged on a certain day, when I should go up to Wairarapa and make inquiries. So I went up; but no one appeared to substantiate or prove any charge against the Inspector. It was plain, from the friction that existed in Wairarapa—the continual meetings for and against the Inspector—that it was impossible he could do any business. I suggested that he should be removed to Nelson. I did not think it expedient to move him at once, because it would have placed him in the position of one against whom charges had been made and proved, whereas there was nothing proved against him. I determined that he should remain, in order to ascertain some further facts. Shortly afterwards I received a letter enclosing wool scab, and a map of the district, stating that if I would go to a certain run in a certain place I would find sheep that were actually in that condition. I went to this place, taking the Inspector with me. I never mentioned to any one what I was informed of until we got to the place. I found that what was stated was the fact. I placed Drummond in charge of that portion of the district, with instructions to inspect the whole of the sheep in that portion one after the other. I believe that if the date is looked up there is a letter on record relating to this; and if the lists are compared it will be found that a great number of sheep were discovered to be scabby in that place. I then thought that Inspector Sutton should be moved, and I recommended that he be removed to Nelson. He refused to go. These are the reasons why I say that I am sure there was a sudden outbreak of scab occurred at a certain time in the Wairarapa District, through sheep being infected which were unknown to the Government.

2260. You say there were indefinite charges made against Mr. Sutton?—Yes.

2261. Who made the charges?—I do not know, with the exception of the one in question, when a letter was sent to me.

2262. You must have known?—I know that there were charges of an indefinite character: Was it not your duty to have followed them up. To put it to you in this way: If you hear a person say that such an Inspector is not doing his work, would you have thought it your duty to act upon that?—No; it is not allowed by the Civil Service Regulations.

2263. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] The Civil Service Regulations! what are they against the provisions of the Act?—It is not by hearing a person say off-hand that such a man should be indicted that you would have sufficient to act upon.

Hon. Mr. Campbell: Indicted: we are not speaking of indictments, but of the reason why the Act has not been carried out.

2264. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You must have had them in some form that you could lay hold of?—It was necessary to have something tangible upon which I could act. It was from Mr. Beetham personally that I heard of it—that was, verbally. The other was the letter I have mentioned. It was upon Mr. Beetham's statement that I wrote the letter to the Inspector conveying what I have already said.

2265. What we want to come to is this: You acted as if there had been specific charges made against Mr. Sutton. Did you know by whom they were made, for you could in fairness have called on the person to prove them, and enabled Mr. Sutton to reply?—There was no specific charge.

2266. Then, why did you go to Masterton in order to make inquiries?—I went to give an opportunity to those people who were making complaints to substantiate their complaints.

2267. Who were these people?—Some of them were the persons by whom letters were sent down. Mr. Beetham was the person who spoke to me on the subject.

2268. Do you think that the course you adopted was the right course to take?—I did under the circumstances. It gave an opportunity of bringing specific charges, if they could do so.

2269. Do you understand my meaning: it seems to me that you may have been perfectly right in making inquiries, but it seems to me that, in intimating that there were charges made against Mr. Sutton, it was surely your duty to see that you had these charges in black and white?—The charges were not specifically against Mr. Sutton, they were generally against the manner of working the Sheep Act in the Wairarapa. It was to give an opportunity to persons to make distinct charges that I took the course I did.

2270. It was necessary for you to have distinct charges, otherwise you could not go into anything?—It was simply to inquire into the whole matter, that would give an opportunity to every person to lay a distinct charge if he wished.

2271. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] At all events, you gave him an opportunity of complaining that a charge was made against him by the department and not substantiated?—No, I did not.

2272. You know that he does complain of that?—Yes; that I am aware of.

2273. You did go to Masterton to make inquiries?—Yes.

2274. And you afterwards removed Mr. Sutton?—I did.

2275. On what grounds?—On the grounds I have related.

2276. What did you inform him?—I do not think I informed him of anything further than that it was expedient to move him to Nelson.

2277. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You consider that any Inspector is liable to removal at any time?—Yes, at any moment, if it is deemed necessary by the Government. If he has any complaint he can make it, but obey orders he must.

2278. In Mr. Sutton's case he was a married man?—Yes.

2279. Was his removal sudden?—He was given three weeks.

2280. You do not consider that he was unnecessarily hurried?—No; it was not so far that he had to go to.

2281. Then, you considered that there was a large amount of scab in the district?—Yes; I found one lot myself. There were others found; I think Elder's was one.

2282. Your impression is that scab existed there actually before?—It must have been so, for the few that I saw must have been infected three or four months.

2283. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] When you found that this man was incompetent, why did you send him to Nelson?—I am thoroughly prepared to answer that question. Knowing how heavily he had been handicapped,——

2284. How handicapped?—The man was going to a new country. The place was scabby from end to end when he went to the Wairarapa. He might have trusted to the information of owners; he might have missed accidentally this particular flock, and he might not be in a position to adduce proof that he was guilty of no neglect.

2285. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You said there were other flocks scabby?—There were two others, I believe; one I know of. I believe that any man might have made such a mistake. This, for certain, it was not considered wise under the circumstances to deal with him severely. He was supposed to be a good man.

2286. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] How do you mean?—He was supposed to be a good man when he went there. There was never any charge against him.

2287. Afterwards you found him at fault?—Where he was going to he would not have the local prejudice which he had to contend with where he was.

2288. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] What is that?—There was a great deal of friction. He was between two parties: there were men who had clean flocks, and men whose flocks were infected.

2289. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Has there been any feeling in the Wairarapa that Inspectors have enforced the Act unfairly in order to shut certain sheep out of the market?—I have heard it stated so. I do not think that such a charge can be laid against the Inspectors. Of course I have heard it stated so.

2290. I have put this question because it may lead to some explanation?—It has been said so, I know. I think they have used excessive caution so as to be on the safe side.

2291. We have evidence that the Inspectors attempted to stop sheep travelling from one subdivision to another, as if they were coming from an infected district into a clean district?—I know of no such case.

2292. The case I refer to is that of Mr. Meredith, who stated that Mr. Orbell tried to stop his sheep at the Ruamahunga Bridge?—There might be circumstances which would justify the Inspector in doing so; he might not be aware that they had a clean certificate.

2293. Has not your attention been drawn to that?—Not to that. I heard something about it, but my attention was not definitively brought to it. I have some recollection of Mr. Meredith writing a letter to the Government about it.

2294. Then, unless there were some special circumstances, Mr. Orbell was not justified in stopping Mr. Meredith's sheep?—They might not have a clean certificate with them. The Inspector may have been justified.

2295. Is it usual to give a certificate after sheep have been cleaned: is there anything in the Act to enable the sheepowner to demand a certificate from the Inspector?—I think so, from the fact that any owner, once his flock has been infected, must have a certificate to show that they are clean. The fact of his not holding a certificate is taken to be proof that his sheep are not clean.

2296. I want to know what clause will authorize a sheepowner after nine months, three months after dipping, to demand a certificate from the Inspector, if the Inspector cannot find scab?—Clauses 13, 14, 15, and 16 of the Act, I think, distinctly imply that he shall inspect.

Hon. Mr. Campbell: It is not a matter of implication when anything comes under the Act: it is an order; the Act becomes a law.

2297. *Hon. the Chairman.*] The question is whether the sheepowner can demand a clean certificate if the Inspector can find no scab?—When sheep are examined by the Inspector, and he is satisfied that they are clean, he gives a clean certificate. That has always been done. There is no power in the Act which can keep it from a man entitled to it that I can see. It is the first time it has been brought under my notice. I only heard of it once before in my life: that was in Auckland.

2298. How does the matter stand in the Wairarapa?—One of the Merediths states that the sheep were inspected by Inspector Drummond, that the Inspector could not discover scab, but he still refused to give a certificate. Application was made by him (Mr. R. R. Meredith) in this letter, which has been put in evidence, dated the 10th July, 1884, in which he says that Mr. Drummond could not find scab. [Letter read.] In reply, Mr. Meredith gets a letter from Mr. Cooper to the following effect: "I am directed to inform you that it appears to be the best way of meeting the difficulty." There is one reason why a clean certificate might not be given; or, rather, there is no reason for giving a clean certificate where sheep are lousy. In a case of that kind they used to be treated as infected.

2299. Are you aware that the whole of the flocks there were lousy more or less, and could on that ground have been declared infected. That was avoided, otherwise they would have the whole district in the infected list. What I ask is, whether that was a good reason to assign or adopt for withholding a certificate, while other flocks adjoining, which were in the same state more or less, held the certificate?—A very good reason if the Inspector was certain that he was pursuing the course for a good reason. An Inspector must in a few cases of this sort use his own judgment.

2300. What you say amounts to this: that an owner cannot demand a clean certificate for his sheep?—If he can bring proof that they are clean and that the Inspector is satisfied. The Inspector in charge ought to be master of his business. If he is satisfied the sheep are clean I do not see how he can withhold the certificate. In this case he was not satisfied, and therefore he withheld the certificate.

2301. But then you say that if he was certain he was pursuing that course for a good reason he ought to withhold it. How do you account for this, that with a dozen flocks adjoining, he did not withhold it?—These sheep must have been on the infected list: there may be many circumstances which would justify the Inspector withholding the certificate.

2301A. Look to that clause 68: "As to what sheep shall be deemed to be treated as infected sheep:" that may be read in a sense that he was not compelled to do anything in the way of giving a certificate, because the sheep were lousy?—I think the Inspector must have been told that these sheep were lousy; he must have satisfied himself in some way as to that.

2302. He acknowledges as to that, but he says why withhold it from me while all the adjoining sheep are lousy?—I cannot say what reason the Inspector might have for withholding it. His flock may have been the last infected.

2303. How do you mean the last infected?—That he was exhibiting his sheep for their certificate, and the Inspector discovered that they were in that state.

2304. But he was clean as regards scab?—The sheep were lousy, and, according to that clause (68), he has to exercise all the powers under the Act as if they were infected with scab.

2305. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] You put a weapon into his hands which he can use against one and not against another, for you say he must use discretion in certain cases?—I think there are cases where a man must use his own judgment.

2306. *Hon. the Chairman.*] There were a considerable number of wild sheep in the bush?—There were.

2306A. And steps were taken in the summer-time to kill them off?—There were.

2307. Did they get rid of them entirely?—I do not know whether they have got rid of them. I know there is an account for a number of them being killed.

2308. What steps are taken to get rid of them?—There is a man who gets so much a head for all he can kill.

2309. How much?—Half-a-crown, or something about that, I think; I could not say unless I had the documents with me. I should not like to commit myself to say exactly how much.

2310. Are they left to catch them as they please?—No; there is only one man that is permitted to do it. He can only do it with the full consent of the neighbouring owners. He has dogs that can be depended upon. He alone is allowed to go out for this purpose.

2311. We have had evidence that some of the adjoining owners have fears that these sheep may be rushed into their flocks?—That might be so if any one but an expert were employed for this work. I should have an objection to any one being permitted to do it who was ignorant of the country.

2312. I want to know whether you gave instructions to the Inspector to see what work is done, that there might be no danger to neighbouring owners?—We have discussed the matter. I have spoken to the Inspector and also to the neighbouring owners, so that nothing of the kind could be done without their consent.

2313. How long do you think it will be before the Wellington District will be clean?—I hope it will be clean by the end of this year at the outside; at all events, I hope to see the greater part clean by that time. Whether there may not be any left on the verge of the bush country I cannot say. I hope to see the whole of the North Island clean very soon.

2314. Making application to have "separate" flocks on the same run—has that matter been brought under your notice: we have heard that runholders having several flocks divide their run in each case into two, three, or four sections, fenced off?—There is a provision in the Act to the effect that such flocks may be considered separate flocks, provided the premises are distinct—yards, and so on.

2315. When applications are made to the Inspector for this purpose, do such applications come before your notice, or are they left to the local Inspector?—I do not recollect a case in which that has been brought under my notice. I have heard of it, and I have been written to on the subject. The Inspector mentioned to me a case somewhat similar as having occurred—the Ica case—in which a whole station was owned by one owner; that owner cut it up into one, two, or three parts, and divided the responsibility with other people.

2316. *Mr. Walker.*] The 29th section is the one under which is taken the power to divide?—But the Act gives no such power. Actually, it says you shall not give a certificate. Doing so is simply to evade the Act.

2317. *Hon. the Chairman.*] It was stated that it came under the interpretation clause?—Where did it occur?

2318. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] In Wairarapa?—Will you say when?

Hon. Captain Fraser: The evidence is here.

Mr. Walker: The interpretation clause rather strengthens the clause in the Act.

2319. *Hon. the Chairman.*] With regard to these separate flocks, are you content with the fact that in some cases they are virtually allowed?—No.

2320. Then, you have not given your consent?—Never, to my knowledge; I might, in fact, say never.

2321. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Have you given instructions to them not to do so?—I think I can say distinctly that I did to Mr. Drummond not very long ago.

2322. *Hon. the Chairman.*] In the Ica case you say that the run was cut up into parts and the flocks were separate: why was that?—It was done to hand over a portion to another owner.

2323. You mean that it was passed from one to another?—I instructed the Inspector to deal with it as one flock.

2324. Have you the power of deciding that, in acting in that way—that is to say, if a man divides his run and leases a portion of it to another person—can you say that there were not two runs, but that it was still the same run?—Unless he puts up separate wool-sheds, and that piece that he sells or leases is worked separately, unless he is separated by a sheep-proof fence, I think it would still be part of the run.

2325. What I want to come to is this: whether a person producing a lease or transfer of a portion of a run from another person, whether that compels you to treat that portion as a separate run and the sheep as a separate flock, or whether it is optional to treat it as a separate portion or

as a part of the whole run?—If he has all the conditions of working that place separate—everything being separate, yards and so on—I do not see how the Inspector can do otherwise than treat it as separate.

2326. If it is not necessary to have a shearing-place, it seems to me that it amounts to this: that he can exercise discretion of that description in this case of the Ica?—I do not see how it can be separated from the run in that case; I cannot see it at all.

2327. Do you know anything about the outbreak of scab on the Mataikuna Run?—Very little.

2327A. We have heard this stated here: that a portion of a flock of about fifteen hundred, called the "river flock," was infected; that the owner did not give notice to the adjoining flockmaster that he had scab in that flock; consequently, that this flockmaster was not put on his guard, and did not take all the precautions that he would otherwise have done. His land joins a portion of the Mataikuna Run, but not that portion in which that scabby flock was. The Mataikuna sheep not being branded with the letter S, one of these sheep got in among the sheep of this adjoining owner and scabbed his sheep. He had to give information that he could not clean within the specified time. He was summoned, and had to pay a fine of 6d. a head for his sheep. The charge against him was failing to clean his sheep within the prescribed time. He contended that, one flock being infected, the whole run should have been declared infected. This was only the other day?—The Mataikuna original outbreak must have occurred before that.

2328. That has not been drawn under your attention?—It has been held, I think by the Crown Law Officer, that the Inspector has power to declare whether sheep going and mixing with S-branded sheep, but not scabby, shall be proclaimed infected. The "mixing" shall determine whether the sheep in question should be declared infected or not.

2329. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Where is that?

2330. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] I should very much like to see it?—That was the opinion of the Law Officer of the Crown. I will send for it. It can be had in a very short time.

2331. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I gather, from what you have said about separate flocks, that you would hardly have considered this one of the Mataikuna Run a separate flock?—I should not think so.

2332. Suppose the case stated was correct, was there something wrong in the circumstance that fifteen hundred sheep, among which scab existed, were the only sheep on the run not marked with S?—There should be something requiring explanation there.

2333. If that was correct it should have been communicated?—Yes.

2334. I asked you whether your attention was drawn to that?—No.

2335. Has your attention been called to the case referred to in this petition of Mr. Edwin Meredith to His Excellency the Governor?—I have no recollection of it; anything brought to my notice would be found referred to in my own handwriting, with my own opinion upon it.

2336. The petition is for the remission of a fine of £50, which was inflicted on Mr. Meredith for driving sheep without a certificate. He says the Inspector had been requested to be present to see the sheep dipped, and to give a permit for travelling. It was stated that the Inspector promised to give the certificate, or rather the permit for travelling, but he withheld or postponed giving it because the number of sheep from those runs had not been made out. He was to have called and given the permit, but he did not call and he did not give the permit. When the sheep were moved the man was proceeded against and fined?—I have not heard all the particulars, but I have heard something about it. I think he denies about the appointment.

2337. He did not attend to see the dipping?—Yes; but the second appointment was not demanded.

2338. The only reason he did not give a permit was that some of the sheep were not going; all had to be put on the same footing. I am asking these questions to see how far the matter was brought under your notice?—If I happened to be in Wellington it might be referred to me. These matters are generally referred to me, but not invariably.

2339. Now, with regard to the Marlborough District, there has been a large increase of scab in that district?—No, not a large increase; some time ago there was an outbreak through wild sheep being driven in upon them.

2340. The district has been infected for many years, has it not?—Yes.

2341. Are you satisfied that the Act has been carried out there in a proper manner?—No.

2342. In what way?—I think I have documentary evidence to prove what I state. When the first suspension clause ceased, then was the time to insist on fines, instead of extending the time any longer. It was then suggested by men who had not received clean certificates that certain stations should be picked out as being the ones to which further extension of time should be allowed. I was requested to do so, being in charge of the district. I condemned any such arrangement. As this could not be done, further extension of time was given: I think it was nine months. That was where the first mistake was made in carrying out the Act.

2343. Who was the author of that mistake?—I was only Chief Inspector of Marlborough. My letter on the subject is, I think, before the Committee.

2344. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] You refer to the extension of nine months given by the Legislature?—Yes.

2345. What was the period of two years, during which it was suspended, allowed for?—When I was moved to Marlborough—that was in 1879—there were, I think, a million of sheep on the infected list. Previously to my taking charge the two years' extension had been granted. It was a part of the Act that such concession should be made to Marlborough.

2346. When did you go to Marlborough?—I arrived there in the latter end of November or the beginning of December, 1879.

2347. Then, about twelve months of the two years had elapsed?—The letter to which I refer will show the exact date. I found that the Amuri was being worked with all the clauses in full force; no fencing existing on the greater portion of the Amuri County. The boundaries were

imaginary, more or less. There were scabby sheep on one side with two years allowed to clean, and we had sheep on the other side which the owners were trying their best to clean. This was an arrangement impossible to carry out. During this extension there was a reduction of the number of scabby sheep. It gave people time to fence. There were many places where they had not the necessary conveniences. I think that during these two years the greater portion of the sheep were cleaned. The greater proportion of these sheep should be clean still. There were three stations, however, where they became reinfected through wild sheep.

2348. Which were they?—The Blairich, the Richmond, and the Waipapa.

2349. Did Flaxbourne clean?—It has been reported scabby.

2350. There are wild sheep on the Crown lands. You are referring to the runs in the Awatere: has there been a fresh outbreak on these three runs?—The whole of the district would have been clean if it had not been for the exception of the Kaikouras. Messrs. McRae, Richmond, and others were fined.

2351. Where did the scab come from?—They were killing wild sheep in one portion of the country that was isolated. They fenced out a large block of country; a very small portion of this is Crown land. The Upton Downs manager went outside the fence and killed five hundred odd sheep. In doing so he rushed a wild ram in over his own fence. This was not discovered until about six weeks afterwards. Unfortunately two or three appear to have got in since that country has been cleared of wild sheep by contract. The Kaikouras have been scabby all along. There are three runs there that were never cleaned. Not a single thing was ever done upon them.

2352. During the two years?—No.

2353. Which are they?—The Waipapa, the Clarence, and the Kincaid.

2354. Directly the Act came into force, did you take steps to see that the Inspectors did their duty in regard to these flocks?—They were powerless until the period of two years would be up.

2355. But there was the clause 66 in the Act, was that acted upon?—No.

2356. Why not?—I had a communication with the then Government with reference to the £10 penalty. There is a penalty of ¼d. for every sheep in the runholder's possession at the end of six months. It was useless to attempt it.

2357. If it had been put in force, do you think it would not have a very great effect upon the runholders?—Not the slightest.

2358. The £10 penalty was never insisted upon for that reason?—No; those men who intended to clean their sheep did it, those who did not are now scabby.

2359. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Was it a question for your consideration as to the effect it would have. The matter was brought under the notice of Government?—I was only Chief Inspector of the district. It is a long time ago. The matter was considered by the Government. I cannot tell you exactly what decision they arrived at, but it was not thought wise to carry it into effect.

Hon. Mr. Campbell: You ought to have seen that it was carried out, as the head of the department.

2361. *Hon. the Chairman.*] He was not the head of the department at that time: he was only the Chief Inspector at Marlborough. Can you tell us, Mr. Bayly, what instructions were sent in regard to this?—I cannot tell you what the instructions were.

2362. Can you tell us where we can get them?—I do not know whether there were instructions: the matter was referred to in one of my general reports from Marlborough at the time. I had not further charge than in the Marlborough District. I recollect that, with regard to the £10 penalty, it was deemed advisable not to carry it out.

2363. *Mr. Walker.*] Did you read the end of the clause: "It will be the duty of the Inspector to lay a fresh information every six months"?

Hon. Mr. Waterhouse: There is no option there.

2364. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] You were there, and did not do it?—Very likely so; but I think there is something else connected with that which has been overlooked. I think there was something in connection with the other clauses.

Hon. Mr. Campbell: No, no; let us stick to this clause.

Witness: By referring to the infected list, when the Act had been twelve months in existence, it will be seen that very many small sheepowners, of from fifty up to three hundred sheep, would have been compelled to pay the £10 fine and expenses, which, to many of them, would have been ruin, while the large owner could have sent his cheque for £10 and not felt it; consequently it was deemed this clause would act unfairly.

2365. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Who was the head of the department at that time?—That is more than I can tell you. The then Premier, Sir John Hall, and Mr. Maunsell had more to do with it than any one else.

2366. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Then, that clause 66 has never been acted upon?—It has never been acted on.

2367. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Now, with regard to separate flocks, are you aware that Mr. Ingles has a separate flock on his run?—I have been so informed.

2368. Do you approve of that?—No; not unless he has a shed erected where he would work them outside.

2369. Are you aware whether his run has been cut up and divided into separate holdings?—I believe so. There has been a fence put up between his clean sheep and the sheep that would be supposed to come to the other part.

2370. Supposing a lease or transfer of a portion of the run, do you think the Inspector, in such circumstances, would be justified in considering the two flocks to be as one—the two parts to be one run—or would he be compelled to consider them as two separate flocks and runs?—As two if the necessary appliances were found there; but they must be considered as one if these appliances for each were not there.

2371. Is it really so; for, if so, a person purchasing a run should understand it?—I have never heard it questioned.

2372. Did you, while Inspector in Marlborough, proceed in all cases to enforce the law where there were breaches of the Act?—I think I did, in every case that I recollect.

2373. I suppose that in many instances you recovered fines?—Yes; I did.

2374. Were these fines paid in every case?—All the fines have been paid that I can recollect, with the exception of these Kaikoura cases. With regard to one that was lately inflicted in Marlborough I think the correspondence is before you.

2375. Which one do you refer to?—To the Upton Downs, of which Mr. Busby is manager.

2376. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Is that Mr. Steward's?—It is Mr. Stafford's old run. I thin the case was adjourned to the 6th November.

2377. I have made a note of those that have been stated in evidence?—Gibson was fined twice: once, I think, the fine was reduced to £10; another time the fine was not enforced, but a bond was given.

2378. Can you state how that remission was made?—I do not know anything about it.

2379. You were in the district?—I cannot say where I was at the time.

2380. You were either Inspector of Marlborough, or you were holding the position which you hold now?—I have never seen it.

2381. Was it not referred to you to report on?—No.

2382. Mr. Reese was fined once, was he not?—Yes, that was for Waipapa; that was some time back, that would be in May or November.

2383. Were you consulted as to that fine?—I think I was on all except the first. I had better explain that: there were two cases against Mr. Reese; this was the last upon which Mr. Reese was proceeded against.

2384. My object in asking the question is to see whether, in this matter of the remission of fines, you were consulted?—In two of them I was: the papers are there.

2385. Are you aware of any fines having been remitted which were not submitted first to you?—I am aware that a certain bond was entered into; that was the only case in which I was not consulted.

2386. Mr. Ingles had a case in which it was remitted?—I should like to give the history of that: There is a misapprehension as to the two cases, which will bear explanation. The first time that Mr. Ingles was proceeded against there was also Gordon Gibson, of Waipapa, which is now Reese's. I was aware that some steps had been taken to make a distinction between those who were doing something and those who had done nothing, especially as the Court would sit in a few days, and could not sit again for three months. Furthermore, I wanted to bring the matter before the public during the session of Parliament. I proceeded against Ingles and Gordon Gibson, under the 23rd section, for not taking means which I considered sufficient to clean their run. When the cases were brought on, I regret to say, through want of evidence on the part of the Inspector, a clear case could not be made out, although there was not any doubt on the matter. The Inspector could not swear positively whether a certain thing had not been done. Owing to this circumstance, and through the recommendation of the Resident Magistrate who heard the case, besides being the first case brought forward, the Government were disposed to take a lenient view, and they fined him in the minimum penalty. Three months afterwards, proceedings were taken against Walter Gibson, and conviction obtained. He had put up fifteen miles of fencing: the Inspector reported that thirty thousand sheep were clean; something was being done in this case, and it was thought that the place would in time be clean. When proceedings came on six months after against Ingles, he had done nothing, and he tried in every way to resist the responsibility of ownership. He had chosen to resist the Government in every way. The last case was deemed one in which no leniency should be shown. He had taken every possible means of resistance. In the Waipapa case the run was mortgaged to one person and the flock to another; but it did not matter who were the owners. Nothing being done for twelve months, it was not deemed right to remit anything. The third fine was for the Clarence.

2387. You were not consulted?—I was not consulted.

2388. That is not in accordance with the Act?—It is not according to the Act.

2389. Would you have recommended it?—If he omits or fails to perform what he has undertaken, the bond can be levied at once. He has appealed against these cases, which are now waiting a decision.

2390. With regard to clause 62, subsection (3): "No compromise made shall effect the Inspector's power to prosecute and recover any fine or penalty." Do you consider that the Inspectors are called on to follow up the fine after it has been inflicted, and see that it is paid?—I do not think it can be so reasoned: once the Inspector has obtained the conviction, the whole matter belongs to the Minister of Justice; it then passes into the hands of the Minister of Justice.

2391. Does it rest with the Minister to remit the fine or otherwise?—No; the course pursued in these remissions, as far as I know, is this: a report is obtained from the Magistrate who heard the case; the report is made on petition by the defendant who had been fined. The whole matter is then brought before the Colonial Secretary, who makes the remission or acts otherwise as he thinks fit; he communicating again with the Minister of Justice.

2392. Then, this portion of the Act is practically a dead-letter?

Hon. Captain Fraser: Quite a dead-letter.

2393. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you not think that such fines should not be remitted except on the recommendation of the Chief Inspector?—It should not, I think, be in the hands of the department at all; it should be settled under some sort of responsibility. If a fine is remitted I think the question of remission should come up upon petition to the House.

WEDNESDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. A. WALKER, examined.

2394. You are a resident of the Wairarapa District?—The Upper Wairarapa or Whareama District.

2395. You have sent to me a communication in reference to the objects of this inquiry into the working of the Sheep and Rabbit Acts?—They are the suggestions of a committee which had been appointed by a public meeting held at Te Nui. There was another meeting held on the same subject at Masterton.

2396. It is in connection with these suggestions that you appear?—Yes; they were forwarded to me.

2397. Were those suggestions drawn up by the committee you refer to?—Yes; by a majority of the committee.

2398. This Committee, I presume, would not be expected to examine these proposals this morning, as we are engaged taking evidence; another morning we shall be able to consider the proposed amendments. But we would like you to state, as far as you can, the reasons for making these suggestions?—The principal thing is that the Act is ambiguous. Different Inspectors read it in different ways. An Inspector in the North Island reads it one way, another Inspector in the South Island reads it in a different way altogether. There have been many instances in the Wairarapa where the Inspectors have been favouring one person and coming down upon another.

2399. I gather, then, that your chief reason is that the Act is not enforced equally in all districts?—Yes.

2400. Your object is, therefore, to provide that there should be no ambiguity about it? will you point out the sections in the Act you refer to?—The first is section 13, which provides for the manner in which the Inspector goes upon the run. Several instances have occurred lately in which the Inspector thought it right, in the discharge of his duty, to pull fences down in a scabby district, making the danger of spreading scab very great indeed. Some instances can be mentioned by the aggrieved parties themselves coming forward.

2401. Do you mean that the clause should be altered?—What is suggested is that certain words should be added.

2402. I shall read the clause as it stands: "It shall be lawful for any Inspector, at such times as he may think fit, to inspect any sheep within his district or subdivision; and, for the purposes of such inspection, or for the purpose of inspecting and examining any dipping apparatus, or for doing any other act which he is authorized or empowered to do by this Act, it shall be lawful for any Inspector, at all reasonable times, to have free ingress, egress, and regress through, over, and upon any premises, lands, or tenements whatsoever." To that you propose the addition of the words "by the usual means in use by the owner or person in charge"?—That is what was suggested by the committee. Another thing is in connection with slip-bars. The owner has put them on the run to get access to the different parts of his run. The Inspector comes along and he removes these slip-bars, or rather he puts them up not in the manner they should be to prevent sheep rubbing them down, thereby endangering the scab spreading. We ought to have the right to send men to see that these bars are put up properly.

2403. You say that they should give you notice as they go?—Yes; that would enable us to see that no damage, or as little as possible, were done. As it is now—the Inspector is only a mortal man like the rest of us—he might take a dislike to a person. What is to hinder him putting that man to perhaps £1,000 damage? I know of my own knowledge two Inspectors who have had machinery made for drawing staples so that they might go on to property.

2403A. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Might not that be that they would be able to get over the ground with the greater freedom?—There is a misinterpretation of the Act on their part. They say they can go where they like, even into a person's bedroom if they please.

2404. I imagine that the Inspector, in riding across the run, comes to a fence. Rather than go round by the road, he draws a staple so that he may go through?—Yes; they have machines made for that purpose.

2405. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Then, you speak also of their going to the houses: they say they have power to do as they like?—Yes.

2406. Would it not be a proper thing to give the manager notice that they were going over the run?—There are some who would do so, others would not; they would say it was nothing to them. If they were to come to the house and say, "We are going over your run to-day," we could not interfere with them in the discharge of their duty.

2407. Do you object to that?—Not at all, if they give us notice.

2408. I think it is clear that he should not go through and leave gates opened?—The Act is so ambiguous as to leave it in that way. The Inspectors ought to be taken to school and taught the Act. Another great point with us is that two years ago sheep were sold or allowed to be sold provided there was no danger; now they are not.

2409. Do you mean that they were allowed to be driven to market?—Yes; provided sufficient precautions were taken.

2410. What remark do you make about that?—The suggestion is that where there are several flocks, only one being infected, the Inspector should examine the other flocks and give a permit for their removal if they are found to be clean. There is a new clause suggested: "When an owner of sheep shall have several flocks depasturing upon any run, or upon any adjoining run, and only one of such flocks is infected, he shall have power to call upon the Inspector to examine any other flock or flocks in his possession for the purpose of obtaining a permit for removal of such sheep; and if, upon such inspection, no infection shall be found in the other flock or flocks, the Inspector shall grant such permit: Provided, however, it shall be lawful for the Inspector, if he sees fit, to require the owner to dip all sheep he desires to remove." Suppose a man has one flock infected. Against

his neighbour the boundary may be no better between them than between the separate flocks. Yet the neighbour is allowed to sell, and he is not allowed to sell, although the danger is no greater with him than with the neighbour.

2411. Will you mention the clauses in the Act that are referred to?—It is suggested that, in the interpretation clause, the word “run” should be expunged, and the word “flock” substituted. “Flock to mean and include any sheep such as the owner shall be in the habit of having shepherded in one flock, or depasturing in one paddock or enclosure, and separated from other sheep by a sheep-proof fence or secure natural boundary.” There was also a suggestion as to the definition of “infected sheep” and “infected flock.” There is one amendment proposed about branding.

2412. First comes clause 13 : clause 20, what do you say to that?—It is thought in the district that a colour would be the best for branding.

2413. The following is the 20th section : “The Inspector of each district shall have a brand not similar to any one already registered hereafter, called an ‘official brand,’ which shall be registered by him in the General Register of Brands Department, in the office of the Chief Registrar of Brands of the district wherein is situated the said Chief Inspector’s office, and shall also be similarly registered in the General Register of Brands of every brand registration district forming part of or adjoining the aforesaid Chief Inspector’s district. The official brand of any Chief Inspector shall be used exclusively by all Inspectors within such Chief Inspector’s district, in such manner as may be appointed by this Act, or by direction of the Chief Inspector of the district.” The amendment you propose is that the Chief Inspector shall register a distinctive colour, with which all infected sheep shall be branded. Any person using such colour without authority to be subject to a penalty?—The Chief Inspector brands with the letter S in red pigment. The letter S, according to the present mode, is indistinct. It becomes a mere blotch on long-woolled sheep; you cannot tell whether it is an S or not. If a distinctive colour were substituted, it would be more easy to tell what sheep were infected. Nearly all people brand with red colour.

2414. You say that most people in your district brand with red?—Yes; even in infected districts nearly all brand with red. The colour to be chosen would not matter so long as it could be easily distinguished. The main thing is protection from your neighbour’s scabby sheep. The following amendment is proposed to clause 25 : “Every owner of any infected sheep shall, as soon as practicable, cause the same to be distinctly wool-branded on the back with the colour registered by the Chief Inspector for that purpose, and such colour shall from time to time be renewed as occasion shall require, so that the same shall be distinctly recognizable.

2415. The Act at present provides that the infected sheep shall be distinctly wool-branded by the owner on the back with the letter S?—We propose that he shall wool-brand with the colour registered by the Chief Inspector, and that it shall be renewed as occasion may require. The letter S is utterly unreliable as an indication that the sheep are infected. Then, in the case of a man having the infection in one small spot or portion of his flock, it seems hard that he should be unable to sell his sheep from a separate flock or paddock. Supposing it to be near lambing time, he should be able to sell, to make room for his lambs, if he is fenced properly.

2416. Do you not think it is a dangerous thing to introduce separate flocks?—No; it is just as dangerous for your neighbour to sell from a run adjoining an infected flock. The complaint against the present system is that it is tying a man up so that he cannot do anything to make room for his lambs. As to removal, I thought it best that a guarantee should be given that they were going for the purpose of being slaughtered, but the committee overruled me, and said they ought to go any way. There was the case of a person who was allowed to cut his run up. Of course the sheep were carefully picked over. Three months after, he is allowed to sell all his sheep.

2417. Because it was a separate run?—Because it was a separate run. This shows what a farce the thing is the way it is now. These sheep actually went to be fattened on a neighbour’s run. The Act points out the duty of the owner, and what is to be done, but unfortunately every district has persons who will not do their duty. The committee also suggest an amendment to section 29.

2418. That clause relates to an owner who has several flocks depasturing on the same run, and only one is infected?—Yes. The committee suggest the following amendment : “When any owner shall have several flocks of sheep depasturing upon any run, and one of such flocks shall become infected, it shall not be lawful for such owner to remove any sheep from any such flock for a period of three calendar months after he shall have obtained a clean certificate for such flock, unless with the written permission of the Inspector upon each occasion of removal, and unless such sheep shall be dipped under the supervision and to the satisfaction of an Inspector.” They also propose the following amendment to section 32 : “No clean certificate shall be given to the owner of any infected flock until the Inspector shall have satisfied himself, by examination, or by the declaration of the owner, that the adjacent flock or flocks on his run are free from disease.”

2419. That is also in connection with this point?—Yes; it all hinges on the one point of having flocks on one run. There is a further amendment proposed. In the present Act the Inspector may or may not give a clean certificate at all. There is no power to compel him to do so.

2420. Have you ever known it withheld?—Yes; there is a case now in the Wairarapa in which it is held in abeyance. The Inspector said he would not grant it because the sheep were lousy; but, if it goes to that, nearly every sheep in the district is lousy, more or less. The certificate is held upon that excuse in abeyance. Why are not all certificates cancelled for lousy flocks?

2421. Who is the Inspector in your district?—Mr. John Drummond, a very good man indeed. We do not know who is to blame for the maladministration of the Act.

2422. You mentioned that he was a very good man: have you considered whether there may not be good reason for withholding it?—He is a good man in a yard, or for detection of scab. I am not a party aggrieved, but I know a good number of people feel aggrieved. The amendment

proposed to section 32 is, that "When the owner of an infected flock shall have complied with the provisions of the Act, and the Inspector shall have found the sheep free from disease at the end of three months after the last dipping, the Inspector *shall* forthwith give such owner a clean certificate."

2423. Then, you think there should be power given in the Act to compel the Inspector to give a clean certificate within three months, if he has found the flock clean?—Yes.

2424. There is a proposal as to simultaneous dipping: "The Inspector shall have power to require owners of all or any infected flocks in any subdivision to dip their sheep twice simultaneously at any reasonable time of the year, and also to require the owners of sheep adjoining infected flocks to dip once simultaneously with the owners of infected flocks any sheep depasturing in paddocks adjoining or near such infected flocks"—Yes; that all adjoining an infected run should be called on to dip at the same time.

2425. Would not that be inconvenient?—I believe it is the main thing. If you attempt to clean sheep you must have clean neighbours. It is quite possible for a stray sheep to get into your flock, and it may not be discovered to be scabby for six weeks or two months. Although I have been clean I am infected again, in consequence of a sheep getting off my neighbour's run. If we were compelled to dip simultaneously the danger would be lessened.

2426. With regard to Crown lands?—That is a burning question with us.

2427. With regard to the Crown lands at Ruahunga, have you taken any steps to clean those lands?—I believe the Government have taken certain steps. They have granted 5s. a head to Mr. Leverton; but that is not enough. The Government are not very liberal. A certain gentleman applied to the Government to be allowed to cut fencing material off the Government bush, so as to fence against the Crown lands, and the Government charged him 10s. per hundred posts royalty for it. Leverton is an energetic, active man.

2428. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Has the gentleman paid it?—He has not paid it, but he has been charged with it. The Government bind him down by strict regulations with regard to the fence. I think that it is monstrous when it is to fence against their own land.

2429. Has not Mr. Leverton another district: do not these lands join each other: are they not all one block?—No; they are separate blocks.

2430. Can you mention other Government blocks: the evidence we have had already laid before the Committee is to the effect that it was all one large block?—There is another large block.

2431. Are there scabby sheep in all these places?—Yes.

2432. What is the name of the block that Mr. Leverton is killing on?—I do not know the name of it.

2433. You say that the Government has done nothing on the other blocks except granting 5s. a head to Mr. Leverton?—They offered 5s. a head, but people would not go.

2434. It is bush land?—Yes.

2435. Is it all bush?—There are bound to be sheep there; but there has been no clearing actually done, although a few trees may have fallen, thereby making small clearings.

2436. Do the sheep go far into these bushes?—They do at certain times of the year.

2437. One would have thought it was too thick?—It depends on the underbush.

2438. The next suggestion is an amendment of the 46th clause?—Yes; the Inspector reads the word "may" rather strangely.

2439. You mean that the word "may" in the proviso should be "shall," and that instead of "sufficient" the word "reasonable" should be inserted?—It is, in effect, that he "shall" give permission if he is satisfied that "reasonable" precautions have been taken.

2440. *Hon. the Chairman.*] The evidence here is that it should not be allowed. The clause reads, "That no sheep shall be driven through any infected run under a penalty of not less than ten pounds, nor, when the number of sheep driven shall be more than one hundred, exceeding two shillings for every sheep so driven: Provided that the Inspector may give permission for any sheep to be so driven if he is satisfied that sufficient precautions are taken to prevent such sheep from becoming infected." You would substitute "shall" for "may," and "reasonable" for "sufficient." It is stated that it ought not to be allowed because of the probability of sheep being dropped, and making their way back again, carrying infection with them?—I am myself dead against sheep going through an infected district except for slaughtering purposes. There is another thing I would mention to the Committee, that is, notice being given by drovers. They never give us proper notice. Something should be inserted in the Act to provide for this—a proper form, so that they could copy it. This is a matter that gives us a lot of trouble. They give us twenty-four hours' notice, which lasts for three days; they very often never state from what end of the run they are going to enter. They would not find any inconvenience in it if notice had to be given every twenty-four hours; but, as it is, you are obliged to send two men for three days to watch for small flocks of sheep that never turn up. I think the notice should be renewed every twenty-four hours, instead of making one notice last for three days. It is very hard on some runs, and amounts to a heavy indirect tax. It is also proposed that every owner of sheep in an infected district shall maintain, to the satisfaction of the Inspector, a sufficient dip, with material for dipping his sheep once, and that in default he shall be subject to a penalty; that, in case of subdivisions infected at the time of the passing of this amendment, this section shall be in force at the end of one month after the passing thereof, and in case of subdivisions proclaimed infected hereafter, at the end of one month after the date of such Proclamation. It is proposed that he should have at all times a sufficient quantity of lime and sulphur to thoroughly dip all his sheep at least once.

2441. You mean that it is proposed that the Inspector should have power to fine him?—Yes; if the owner has not at all times sufficient material to dip his sheep at least once, especially in a place where there are infected sheep. There is one place where the man has neither dip nor anything else. If that man is infected it is a most serious thing. The Act gives power to call on the

owner, within a month after scab is declared, to erect dip, &c., but the scab is liable to spread in the meantime. It is no hardship to be compelled to have to dip once and to have the materials for that purpose.

2442. *Mr. Buchanan.*] I was under the impression that it was necessary to have a dip always on every run?—No.

2442A. It was suggested by one of the witnesses that the Inspector should have power, within an infected district, within a certain radius from the infection, to call on owners to put up a dip?—We think that a man should certainly have the material to dip once. There is also clause 67 as to fees and fines: "All fines to be paid into an account to be called 'the Sheep Fund,' and, in the case of fines, to be applied in districts where levied in the eradication of scab." We think that the districts should get the benefit of these fines. They would go to assist people in cleaning their sheep and fencing against Crown lands.

2443. Do you think the penalties too heavy?—The penalties are not too heavy for men who will not do their duty. But under present circumstances it is sometimes a puzzling thing to know what the Act, as interpreted by an Inspector, means.

2444. Are those all the amendments proposed by the committee?—Yes.

2445. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] The only question I would ask is as to the efficiency of the men who now act as Inspectors: are they capable men: in my experience the continuance of scab is owing to the kind of men employed: are they capable?—Two are not; one is.

2446. Do you think that, if really capable men had charge, scab could be eradicated?—Undoubtedly; it is my conviction that scab could be cleaned if the head of the department is interested in doing it.

2447. You think that better steps taken to carry out the Act would settle every difficulty?—Yes.

2448. You think it could be thoroughly cured if dealt with in a proper manner by the Inspectors?—Yes; the service is largely increased with us. We formerly had two; we have now six.

2449. Would you say that they are dilatory in carrying out the Act for the sake of their billets?—I should not like to say that. One is a most efficient man—I do not say for the complete carrying out of the Act—but for the detection of scab he is most efficient.

2450. In how short a time could the district be cured?—In eighteen months, or even less than that.

2451. *Mr. Dodson.*] Have you had any experience of the Marlborough District?—Yes; I have had large experience of the Marlborough District. I have been nineteen years a manager, and have spent a large portion of my time amongst scabby sheep, although I have never been fined.

2452. *Captain Russell.*] Can you conceive any district in which it would be impossible to cure scab—such places as Tardale for instance: would you guarantee to clean it?—I believe the most difficult country can be cured of scab. You cannot guarantee that it will remain so, but I believe it can be done.

2453. Do you think bush land is more difficult to deal with than any other land?—Yes; a dog has no chance to work sheep in the bush. On the ordinary hills a dog can work. Bush dogs also scatter the sheep.

2454. Do you know Mr. Ingles's country in the Kaikouras: can you say anything as to the difficulty of cleaning that country?—Fencing is the principal thing; that is the thing, to get it fenced first.

2455. *Mr. Dodson.*] The trouble you had was not sufficient fencing: could you have had the country clean?—With sufficient fencing I could.

2456. *Captain Russell.*] You are of opinion that if the Act were stringently enforced scab could be got rid of?—If it were administered in a proper manner by the Inspectors there ought to be no difficulty; it would soon be stamped out. Once a district was clean it would remain clean by taking proper precautions. To be sure that it is thoroughly eradicated, you want different men altogether.

2457. *Mr. Walker.*] Have you any experience of other parts of the colony?—No.

2458. Are fines imposed under this Act in your district?—Yes; they are heavy.

2459. Have the fines been recovered simply on technical points?—I cannot say in all cases. There is a case coming off on the 29th—the case of Mr. Andrew. It was heard and adjourned.

2460. Have some fines been imposed for certain technical omissions?—Yes; there have been a number of people fined for little bits of breaches and "catches."

2461. You think they ought to have been inflicted properly?—There is no doubt about that.

2462. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you know whether scab is increasing in North Wairarapa?—It has always been worked down in the autumn; once, according to ex-Inspector Telford, as low as one run. Seven weeks after he cancelled six certificates.

2463. Is it increasing?—Apparently, it is about the same as it has been for the last nineteen years. In this end it is stamped out properly.

2464. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Of the Inspectors pulling down fences, how many instances came under your notice where fences were pulled down and not put up again?—It is only from hearsay; but evidence of it will be brought before this Committee if permission is granted. Two parties will come forward, if required, to speak to a case within the last month.

2465. Suppose that an owner was unwilling to allow ingress for detection of scab: suppose, for instance, he locks his gate?—That would be interfering with the Inspector in the discharge of his duty. The Inspector ought to come to the station and get the key. Why should an owner run the risk of the Inspector being careless—leaving gates open to the danger of that owner's flock.

2466. Have you not got your legal remedy against the Inspector in case damage is done, just the same as you would have against anybody else?—There is nothing for it in the Act; the Inspector can go all over the run.

2467. Is there anything to absolve the Inspector more than any other person?—There is nothing in the Act that provides for protection against his damage.

Hon. the Chairman: You would have to show carelessness on the part of the Inspector, I take it.

Mr. Lance: There is a clause in the Act which provides for a case of the kind.

2468. *Mr. Buchanan.]* You would have your legal remedy in any case?—I am quite willing to mention the names of the two Inspectors who have had machines made, if required.

2469. You have stated your opinion that the Inspector should give notice?—Yes.

2470. Supposing the Inspector travelling has given you notice that he would enter upon your run from such a direction, but that bad weather prevented him, would you have him wait?—I would have nothing to do with that. He would have power to enter by the ordinary way by which the public travel.

2471. You said that the Inspector before entering at all should give you notice: how if he is delayed by bad weather?—When he comes he should come to the house.

2472. But, supposing he is coming from a different direction altogether, would you compel him to go thirty miles round, when possibly ten miles would be sufficient?—In our district seventeen thousand acres is considered a large run.

Mr. Lance: There is an instance where a run was entirely cleaned by Mr. Foster. Indeed Mr. Foster was told off by the Government to do the work, that is, for no other purpose than to clean this run. Mr. Foster never went near the homestead. He was constantly about the run. He was constantly dropping in without either the master or men knowing anything about where he was. Mr. Foster succeeded in cleaning that run.

2473. *Hon. the Chairman.]* You have two amendments to clause 89?—Yes; one new clause. The general effect of it is that the Inspector shall be compelled to grant a permit when any owner of sheep shall have several flocks. He should have power to call on the Inspector to examine any other flocks for removal if there be no infection. It provides simply that the Inspector shall be compelled to permit sheep travelling from certain portions of the run where no scab is found.

2474. *Mr. Buchanan.]* You raise a very important question as to permitting part of a flock to travel. You said there is one Rabbit Agent and five Inspectors?—Three are at one end and two at Masterton.

2475. Have not two Inspectors been appointed because they could do rabbit-work: that is, is it within your knowledge that two Rabbit Inspectors were also made Sheep Inspectors that they might do both classes of work?—Yes.

2476. In despite of that, do you say that a Sheep Inspector goes over the ground to-day and a Rabbit Agent to-morrow?—I have seen three men on the ground in one day.

2477. Sheep Inspectors and Rabbit Agents?—Yes.

2478. Do I understand you to say that in your opinion scab was not actually diminished?—I cannot say; there has always been a gradual decrease in the autumn.

2479. *Mr. Dodson.]* Do the sheep in the back country of the Clarence and the Tardale Runs come down in winter, or do they stay in the snow?—During the first year I was there I brought them down and held them.

2480. You do not think the snow drives them all down?—No.

FRIDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 1884.

Mr. G. S. COOPER, examined.

2481. *Hon. the Chairman.]* You remember giving evidence before a Committee on the petition of Telford on the subject of the working of the Sheep Department, especially the Rabbit Act?—Yes; I remember having been before a Committee on the petition of Telford.

2482. In the evidence I observe you say that you think some alterations would be desirable. Do you remember to what that referred?—Well, it is so long since I gave the evidence I hardly remember what I did say.

2483. The gist of the whole evidence before that Committee apparently was that there was divided authority. The Chairman, I think, put it that there seemed to be a trinity in the department, there was Mr. Bayly, Mr. Cooper, and Mr. Maunsell?—Yes.

2484. And I believe, in reply to something of that sort, you said that there ought to be some change?—Yes; I do remember that.

2485. I see also the report on that petition recommends that a change should be made in the department: has any change been made: has that report been acted upon?—It was not acted upon at the time; but subsequently changes have taken place from Mr. Maunsell dropping out of the service.

2486. How does the department now stand?—The external working is entirely done by Mr. Bayly, with very little direct control; and the secretarial part of the work is done by me.

2487. Then, all the correspondence, I suppose, is conducted by you?—Yes; it is all recorded in my office—every letter.

2488. And then referred to Mr. Bayly, if it refer to the external working?—Yes; for his report and suggestions.

2489. Does he recommend everything that is done: has he to get the sanction of the department?—Yes; for everything of importance.

2490. For instance, the appointment of Inspectors?—Yes; certainly.

2491. Who has the appointment?—The Colonial Secretary; but he makes them, as a rule, on the recommendation of Mr. Bayly.

2492. Is every appointment referred to him for his report: before the appointment is made, is the name submitted to him?—Yes; it has been so now for some years.

2493. And his recommendation, I suppose, is generally acted upon?—Yes; I think it always has been, as far as I can remember. It would certainly be, unless there was some strong reason otherwise; but I do not remember any case having occurred.

2494. Then, again, with regard to other cases than the actual appointments, I suppose his recommendations are accepted generally?—Yes.

2495. Can you recommend any change in the organization of the department at the present time?—No; as it stands now, I think not.

2496. I believe in the Australian Colonies the department is differently managed, is it not?—Yes; there is generally a Minister of Agriculture in the Australian Colonies—not a separate Minister of Agriculture, but one of the Ministers has charge of the Department of Agriculture, and with it the Stock Department. In Sydney it is the Minister of Mines who takes Agriculture, and he has the Stock Department. I am not sure who has it in Melbourne, but I think it is the Chief Secretary.

2497. Then, there is one person who is permanent head of the department, who undertakes charge of everything, both indoor and outdoor work?—Yes.

2498. And he is responsible simply to the Minister?—Yes; he has a separate department of his own, that is not a branch of any other department.

2499. They recognize apparently more thoroughly the great importance of the Sheep and Rabbit Department than we do?—Yes; I suppose they do.

2500. Do you think that this department is one of the most important departments that we have?—I do, certainly.

2501. Is it not of sufficient importance to be placed on the same footing as that I have referred to?—Yes; I think it would be so. I may say this, however, that the conformation of the country is so different in New Zealand from what it is in Australia that you can hardly do without a man whose whole time is spent in the field. In the other colonies they have a centre from which they work, such as Sydney or Melbourne. They can radiate out, and do their work from there without spending much time in the field. Now, Mr. Bayly's work keeps him entirely away from headquarters; therefore there would be a difficulty about his conducting the correspondence as well.

2502. Probably you would correct that last portion of your evidence then, when you said you thought the work might be conducted better if, as in the Australian Colonies, there was one permanent head having control indoors as well as outside: you think you must divide it?—It is difficult to explain exactly what I mean. I think that one man, if he was ever so good a correspondent, could hardly keep the work thoroughly well up, and do the out-door inspecting as well, in this country—certainly not so easy as he could in Australia.

2503. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] He could have an assistant?—Yes, if he had a good smart office-man it might answer.

2504. *Mr. Dodson.*] Mr. Bayly is sometimes six weeks away, is he not?—He is often more than six weeks away.

2505. And the correspondence would accumulate during his absence, so that it would be impossible for him to overtake it?—Yes; I may say that it was lately in contemplation to transfer the department to the Crown Lands Department.

2506. *Hon. the Chairman.*] For what reason was that?—Because it was thought more cognate to the work of the Minister of Crown Lands. It was intended to make him Minister of Agriculture as well, and give him charge of everything relating to agriculture. That did not assume actually a concrete shape; it was only just mentioned.

2507. Would you recommend a change of that description?—I think I should.

2508. It seemed to me that probably the thing would work in this way: If you had one permanent head, he would remain at the head office and superintend all the correspondence. He would have under him two Chief Inspectors, or two Superintending Inspectors, one for the North Island and one for the South, or one Superintending Inspector, who would be always in the field, and leave the correspondence entirely to the head office?—That is really what happens now. Mr. Bayly corresponds very little.

2509. Then, you do not recommend any change upon that?—No; I do not think so. I do not think you can have it much better than it is now in this country.

2510. *Mr. Walker.*] I suppose one difficulty is that very often a good man in the field is not a good man in the office?—That is so.

2511. It is essential that the man should be good in the field?—It is most essential. That is the most important point, I think.

2512. *Mr. Buchanan.*] In the case of a directorate of a company you would frequently find what might be called a "secretary-manager," a manager of details, the general management coming from the directors. Taking Mr. Bayly's position as Superintending Inspector, supposing his powers were still further extended so as to be similar to those enjoyed by Mr. Bruce, or Mr. Curr, in Australia, do you think that, if he were constantly in the field, or nearly constantly in the field, and gave his general directions to a secretary-manager in the office, that that would work?—It might. Yes; if he had a very good man it would.

2513. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Are you satisfied with the way in which Mr. Bayly does his work?—I think Mr. Bayly has done his duty honestly and fairly, with considerable knowledge of the subject, and, on the whole, satisfactorily.

2514. Would you state to the Committee in whose hands the remission of fines rests when convictions have taken place under the Act?—It rests actually with the Governor, but on the advice of the Minister.

2515. I suppose that no remission of fines would be made without referring it to the Inspector who has laid the information?—No; I think not. I do not think any remission has been made without the knowledge of the Inspector.

2516. In one case, not long ago, a bond was taken instead of the payment of the fine?—Yes.

2517. Do you know on what ground that was done?—It is the first case that has happened, and I will tell you the argument by which it was defended, on which the application was made, and

by which the Minister defended the advice to the Governor. It was this: The person who was fined represented that to take the money from him would deprive him of the means of doing that which it was necessary to do in order to cure his flock—that is to say, putting up expensive fencing, and handling a flock of forty thousand sheep, putting them through the dip, and so on, all of which would cost a large amount of money. If this fine were taken from him it would deprive him of the means of doing this. Upon that argument the Colonial Secretary decided that he would not take the money from him at once, but he would give him an opportunity of spending the money in the cleaning of his flock; and, if within a reasonable time, say, eighteen months—I do not think there was any time named in the bond, but at all events that was the understanding—that if he could produce a clean certificate at the end of that time the bond should be cancelled, and he would be let off the fine. On the other hand, if he did not work as it was intended he should do during that time, the bond would be put in suit, and the money recovered from him. That was the understanding.

2518. The Act itself does not recognize the taking of any bond?—No, it does not; but there is nothing in the Act to prevent it. There is nothing in the Act to say that the fine shall be paid within a particular time.

2519. Do you not think it will act as a precedent in other cases?—Yes; I think it would be brought up as a precedent in other cases, and I do not think very unfairly either.

2520. Do you think it a desirable one?—I think that the object of the Government ought not to be to hurry a man, and to take the money from him. The real object is to get the country clean of scab. If you take £500, £600, or £700 from a man, and impoverish him and bring him to the verge of ruin, you do not gain the object you have in view—to clear the land from scab. The money is not worth thinking of, so far as the Government is concerned, but it is a very serious matter for the poor man who has to pay it.

2521. When you consider what has taken place in the Marlborough District during the time that the Act was suspended, do you not think that concessions have very little effect?—Well, they have had very little effect hitherto; but I think it is a different thing where you hold in your hand a fine of £700, and hang it over a man's head. It is a very strong incentive to him to work.

2522. Do you think they will put that bond in force?—I think so; at all events, if I have an opportunity, I shall very strongly advise its being done, if he does not produce a certificate in time.

2523. Of course, there is this view of the matter: others have been fined and have been put to very heavy expense in cleaning their flocks. They have done so, and I think they feel this is exceptional treatment?—Well, I think the others should have been treated in the same way.

2524. They were not treated in the same way?—I should have treated them in the same way if I had had to do it.

2525. *Mr. Walker.*] Might I ask if fines in any other case have been remitted under the same circumstances?—No; I do not think so. I do not know of any case quite the same. But there was one case—the first time the Messrs. Ingles were fined—when the fine was reduced from £112 10s. to £5. This was an absolute remission of £107 10s., and no bond was taken.

2526. For instance, if a conviction against a licensed victualler was recorded, would a bond be taken instead of a fine?—No; I should think certainly not in that case. The cases are not parallel.

2527. *Mr. Dodson.*] The Governor has a general power to remit fines in a number of cases?—Of course the Governor has the power of remitting any fine, the same as he has of saving the life of a man sentenced to be hanged.

2528. *Mr. Buchanan.*] A general power not confined to any Act?—No; the power of remission of fines is part of the Royal prerogative.

2529. Which really means that the Government of the day has the power to override the principal provisions of any Act?—If you put it so strongly as that, I must admit that it is so; but it is a power which is very rarely used.

2530. *Hon. the Chairman.*] The object of the Committee is, I think, to ascertain how the Act has been carried out. Can you state to the Committee what the action of the Government has been? Of course you represent the Minister, as really the head of the department. As to the instructions that have been issued from time to time, do they all tend in the same way to enforce the Act impartially or otherwise?—Always to enforce the Act strictly and impartially. The great object the Government have in view is to get the country clear of scab, in order that we may be on an equal footing with other Australasian Colonies, who at present refuse to exchange stock with us.

2531. You are aware that at the present time there is a good market there?—I believe there is, if we were in a position to export. The great object of the Government is to be able to say to Australia, "We are clean." That is what they have been working for ever since this Act was in contemplation.

2532. Did the Government ever contemplate killing sheep in certain districts, and paying compensation for them?—The subject has been thought of, but I do not think it was ever seriously discussed.

2533. Was not that one of the reasons why scab was introduced into the Diseased Cattle Act as one of the diseases specified there?—I do not know, but I think probably it was.

2534. But it has never been acted upon?—No.

2535. The Committee were puzzled at the evidence we got regarding the District of Auckland: that, in a place where the flocks are small, and where they are all nominally within fences, scab should still remain and break out again afresh. You must have noticed that?—Yes; it is a most extraordinary thing. It is a thing that no one can understand.

2536. Can you give us any information regarding it?—No; I know that it is the case. I know that most astonishing disclosures take place. Scab has been found in a place where the flocks have been supposed clean, and have held a clean certificate for years, and it turns out, on subsequent inspection, that there has been scab for years.

2537. Are you satisfied with the way in which the Inspectors carry out their inspection there?—No, I am not. I do not think the administration is what it ought to be.

2538. You would recommend the removal of some of the officers, perhaps?—I think I should, if I were in Mr. Bayly's place.

2539. Has Mr. Bayly been remiss in not recommending removals, or not reporting in that way? No, I do not think he has. There are papers in the office which would clear him from that imputation.

2540. He has reported upon this?—Yes.

2541. And recommended certain action?—I am not quite sure that he has recommended an exact line of action, but he has pointed out deficiencies which ought to be cured.

2542. How long ago is that?—Some few months.

2543. It has not been acted upon yet?—It was not long before the Atkinson Government went out of office. Since then, there has been a continual change, and such points as that are not taken up.

2544. The Atkinson Government had not time to attend to it?—They had not time to attend to it.

2545. Does that remark you just made apply to any other district?—No, I do not think it does.

2546. Taranaki?—There has been a great improvement in Taranaki lately.

2547. Wanganui?—At Wanganui we have one of our best officers in the department.

2548. There again scab seems to break out?—Yes; they have been very successful in concealing scab; but I think we shall soon get rid of it in that district.

2549. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Is it not a fact that Mr. Richardson was ill upon the occasion of scab breaking out there?—I think it was. Mr. Richardson has not been so active of late as he was previously. He has been subject to illness, and he has not been so efficient in his duties, but through no fault of his own.

2550. He had a fine reputation in the Wairarapa?—Yes; he is one of our best officers in the department. He was sent up there on that account.

2551. Do you recommend the removing of officers from district to district periodically?—I think it would be a good thing not to leave a man too long in a district.

2552. He gets friends, I suppose, and finds it difficult to work?—Yes.

2553. With regard to the Wairarapa, are you satisfied with the work there?—Yes, I think the work there is now very good.

2554. There are some very difficult men to deal with in the Wairarapa?—Extremely difficult; perhaps more so than in other places.

2555. We heard something about Mr. Sutton's removal. What seemed rather strange was that Mr. Bayly went up to the Wairarapa to hear if there were any charges to be made against Mr. Sutton; but no one met him, and no charges were made?—Yes.

2556. It seems strange Mr. Bayly should have acted in this way: should have gone there for the purpose, without having got some specified charge before he started. Was it not so?—Yes, I think it would have been better that he should have had specific charges before him, but he did not. He went up to see what was going on. He did not know the Wairarapa himself; he had not been through the district before. Complaints having been made of Mr. Sutton, he went up to see the people, make himself acquainted with the country, see what was going on, and hear any charges any one might bring. No one brought any charges; but he looked round the district, and came to the conclusion that it would be better to make a change.

2557. With regard to the other districts, are you satisfied with the officers appointed there?—I am not so sure about that. I do not mean to say I am not satisfied, but I am not able to give a reliable opinion, because I know very little of the country, and I do not know the officers.

2558. I suppose, to a large extent, you judge by results?—Yes; and, judging by results, I think we have some very good officers, and I think we have some that are not very good.

2559. *Mr. Walker.*] Does the department generally look for results in its officers?—Yes.

2560. Then, if a district remains unaccountably scabby for years, does the department, so to speak, keep that Inspector under a peculiarly sharp eye?—Yes.

2561. It seems almost strange that in the Auckland District there was not some change, does it not?—I think there will be some change there before very long.

2562. In the case of these rams and this bond being taken, were the Inspectors who laid the informations consulted in each case?—I cannot answer that question; I am not quite certain. I think they were; but I do not like to give a positive Yes or No.

2563. Are you not of opinion that, if an active Inspector is doing his best, in laying informations, and finds that the result of a conviction is a remission, or a bond being taken almost against the spirit of the Act, it must of necessity tend to lessen his exertions in the future, and discourage him?—I do not know that. I do not think I should feel so if I were the officer.

2564. I am afraid the department has got too much imbued with the prerogative of mercy?—I think there are some who would not say so.

2565. Has not your experience led you to believe that a scabby district creates a peculiar conscience?—No; I do not know it does. I do not admit that.

2566. *Mr. Dodson.*] Does not the Inspector visit a district whether there are complaints or not?—Certainly.

2567. *Mr. Bayly's* visit to the Wairarapa might have taken place whether there were any complaints or not?—Certainly; it must have taken place in the natural course of events.

2568. How long do you think it advisable that the Sub-Inspectors should remain in a district: you said they should be changed frequently?—I do not think I said "changed frequently." What I would say is, that I think they should be changed occasionally, every three, four, or five years, or something of that sort.

2569. *Hon. the Chairman.*] They get allowances for removals, do they not?—Yes; they get their expenses paid.

2570. *Mr. Dodson.*] You occasionally have little difficulties in the department, through having to consult the Minister of Lands relative to the waste country—the “no man’s land”?—I did not say that. I have not been examined on that point.

2571. You think at all events that a beneficial change would take place if the department were put under the Minister of Lands?—Yes; I do think that.

2572. I presume that was your reason?—No; that was not altogether the reason. It was thought it would be advisable that the Minister of Lands should have all departments connected with land under his control.

2573. You have not had any difficulty thrown in your way by the Lands Department in attempting to clean this country?—No; there has been no difficulty thrown in the way.

2574. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Would there not be delays in passing backwards and forwards to the department, having to refer to the Lands Department and get their replies?—Not if the Lands Department took charge of the Stock Department. We should wash our hands of it altogether. The Colonial Secretary would have nothing to do with it.

2575. I mean as it now stands?—We have no communication with the Lands Department, except occasionally to ask a question.

2576. Have you not to refer certain questions to the Lands Department?—Very rarely; and we always get prompt action when we do. That is not a cause of delay at all.

2577. *Mr. Dodson.*] This Clarence country has been recognized by the department as exceptionally difficult to clean—the case in which the remission of fines took place?—Yes. It was represented that, in order to clean the country effectually, some number of miles of fencing would require to be put up; and that, if the owner of the run were called upon to pay the £700 fine, he would be without the means of putting up the fence, and therefore without the means to clean the run. He had not only to put up these miles of fencing—seven miles, I think—but also to dip forty thousand sheep.

2578. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] To avoid paying the fine he has to have the sheep cleaned?—He is allowed to keep the money, to use it to put up the fence and dip his sheep. If he produces a clean certificate, the bond will not be pressed; if he does not, the bond will be put in suit.

2579. *Mr. Dodson.*] There is some correspondence which has taken place about a road: has not Mr. Ward asked the department to endeavour to get him a road through some of Mr. Bullen’s country? Has that come before the department?—It has not been in my office. It would be with the Crown Lands Department. If he required to take the land compulsorily, it would go before the Public Works Minister.

2580. Then, you would not know about that?—No; I do not know at all.

2581. *Mr. Lance.*] I understood you to say that the Inspector’s opinion was generally asked before the fines were remitted?—Yes; I believe so.

2582. Mr. Foster says he was not asked. This is an extract from his evidence: “Q. Upon whose recommendation were the penalties remitted? A. I am not sure, except as regards the extract I have read in answering Mr. Gibson’s petition. Q. You were not consulted? A. I was not consulted in this matter. Q. You were not consulted prior to the fines being remitted? A. No.” He is very precise?—I do not know about that.

2583. Mr. Foster is a Sub-Inspector, and he says that he considers that when he brings an information in the Magistrate’s Court then his business is over, and he has nothing to do with collecting the fines?—Nothing whatever. His duty is ended when he goes out of Court.

2584. Here are two adjoining properties—Ingles’s and Gibson’s. In one case a fine has been inflicted and paid; in the other a fine has been inflicted and remitted?—Yes.

2585. Do you know any reason why Mr. Ingles’s fine should not be remitted?—I would not say the fine should be remitted, but I do not know why he should not be treated in the same way as the other man.

2586. I forget what the fine was: £150 I think?—Yes.

2587. Of course he thinks it a very great hardship. He had to buy fencing like Gibson or any one else. I wanted to know whether there was any cause why he should not be put on the same footing as Mr. Gibson?—I do not know why there should be a difference between them. In Mr. Gibson’s case the thing was done without any trouble, while Mr. Ingles gave all the trouble he could.

2588. He fought the department inch by inch?—For my part I do not think that any reason why he should be treated differently, but other people might.

2589. *Mr. Lance.*] Have you heard that this bond which Mr. Gibson has given to the Government is likely to be enforced?—I have not heard anything about it. I have no doubt it will be enforced after the time stated if his sheep are not clean.

2590. *Mr. Dodson.*] Does the department look upon the bond as a mode of payment: a commercial man looks upon it in that light, and enforces it in due course?—If the conditions are fulfilled—if this fencing which he undertook to put up is put up, and if he produces a clean certificate, then we tear up the bond.

2591. Then, his case will be considered at that time?—Yes.

2592. That is a part of the bond?—No; there is no condition in the bond: it is an unconditional bond. It could be put in a suit to-morrow without asking any questions.

2593. *Hon. the Chairman.*] If he cleans his run, spends money upon it, and obtains a clean certificate, that will be taken into account, and the propriety of remitting the bond will then be considered?—Yes.

2594. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] On the removal of an Inspector or Sub-Inspector, is he entitled to any compensation for being removed?—If he is removed from one district to another district, at the same rate of salary, he is entitled to the expenses of his removal.

2595. Supposing he is dismissed altogether?—If he is dismissed from any fault of his own he is not entitled to anything; but if from no fault of his own, not from incapacity, but for the good of the service, then he is entitled to compensation.

2596. Because we have evidence that on one being removed from some place in the South he

property or other property: if you proposed to remove such a man as that for some cause or other, would you not run the risk of losing a thoroughly good man, because if he removed he would have to sell off his property?—Of course you might run that risk.

2621. So that really this periodical removal would have to be very carefully exercised?—Very carefully.

2622. The Chairman put a question to you with regard to Mr. Bayly's visit to another district in connection with Mr. Sutton's inspectorship?—Yes.

2623. Are you aware that one or more public meetings had taken place in the district, at which bitter complaints were made of the state of scab in the district?—Yes; I am aware that there was one meeting, at any rate. I can remember it quite well.

2624. Were other general complaints made, in addition to those emanating from this meeting, as to the existence of scab in the district?—I think there was, if I remember rightly.

2625. Do you know that it was urged that Mr. Bayly, owing to the general dissatisfaction, should personally visit the district and see as to the state of affairs?—Yes; I think I said so.

2626. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Do you not think, when the removal of an Inspector is necessary, that the removal should be from the employment altogether?—My own feeling in the matter is that the only case in which removal is required is where a man is not doing his duty, and my own opinion is that if he is not doing it in one district he will not do it in another.

2626A. I would ask you whether removal from the employment altogether would not be the most effectual?—In many cases it would, but I do not think that would apply to all cases.

2627. Do you know why Mr. Orbell was removed from Poverty Bay?—Yes; because a better man was required in Wairarapa.

2628. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Was he not removed to Nelson?—Yes; I should have said Nelson. He was removed to Nelson, and then he was sent to Wairarapa.

2629. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Why remove an Inspector at the expense of the colony?—If a man is doing his duty where he is, I should not remove him at the expense of the colony unless he is wanted elsewhere.

2630. *Hon. the Chairman.*] If you do not remove him at all there is no prospect of promotion?—No.

2631. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] If he is not doing his duty he should be removed altogether?—I do not intend to say that an Inspector should be removed from one district to another because he is not doing his duty, but when I thought it would be for the benefit of the service that he should be removed. It frequently happens that he forms acquaintanceships, and it is better for himself and for the service that he should be removed.

2622. *Hon. the Chairman.*] It has been recommended here that fines inflicted under these Acts should be remitted only on petition to the House of Representatives: do you think there is any objection to that, or would you recommend it?—No; I see no objection to it: but what is to be done in the meantime? Suppose a man is fined immediately after the session, and six or eight months elapse before the next session comes, would you take his money from him, or would you take a bond from him to abide by the decision of the House?

WEDNESDAY, 1ST OCTOBER, 1884.

Mr. BAYLY, examination continued.

2633. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I asked you yesterday about sheep in the Marlborough District?—Yes; you asked me why a certain clause in the Act was not put in operation.

2634. What clause was that?—The 66th clause.

2635. In respect of the Marlborough District, is there any instance in which you have prevented the Inspectors laying information where there has been a breach of the Act?—None that I am aware of. The extent to which I have gone has been in withdrawing the information in one case.

2636. What case was that?—That was the case of McRae's. There were some rams running with his flock. He was fined between £200 and £300. There was another case brought against him, and in this I allowed the information to be withdrawn.

2637. What was your ground?—On the ground that this was a very small case to bring on when he had been convicted in a very heavy penalty.

2638. Do you know of no other instance in which the proceedings were withdrawn?—No; I know of no other case where they have been withdrawn under the same circumstances.

2639. Have you instructed the Inspectors to proceed wherever breaches of the Act occurred?—There was that one case of Mr. McRae's, in which I may say I convicted myself out of my own mouth, and for which I am responsible. The act unwittingly occurred. There was another station adjoining him; they had put their rams to their ewes. It was reported to me by Mr. Cook, never dreaming but what these sheep would be clean within three months. It slipped my memory. That is the only case in which I know of during my course where I omitted to carry out the Act.

2640. Whose sheep were they?—Mr. Richmond's, the Upton Downs. As Sheep Inspector of Marlborough, and so long as I held that position, I held myself accountable. I may also be allowed to make a statement: As far as these Upton Downs sheep are concerned they are placed in a peculiar position. They are bounded by scabby sheep, namely, wild sheep. There was nothing to prevent him bringing in foreign sheep. I never dreamed but that they would be clean within three months, and there would be an end of the matter. Although I had no doubt they would be clean they were still scabby at the end of six months.

2641. You say that the owners of this run could have brought in other sheep in place of lambs, and therefore kept up his number—in one case he would have to buy sheep, in the other case he would be breeding them—there is a difference. Would not the proper course be to enforce this Act, and to recommend that it should be amended so that they could not bring other sheep into scabby

runs?—That was my intention. I have laid on the table papers on the subject, so that the Government might amend the Act if they saw fit, but it has been postponed.

2642. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Did it never cross your mind as to the public injury that might be done in connection with this run?—Which.

2643. This one you referred to?—It was simply that it slipped my memory, the fact of these rams being put in. When I took steps to have the matter remedied we could only see five rams.

2644. *Hon. the Chairman.*] With regard to the run you speak of as adjoining the open country, is there any reason why it should not be fenced out?—It was fenced out; on two occasions rams have broken in. About the time these rams were put in a contract was entered into. The whole of the lower part of the country has been cleaned. Every sheep that could be got hold of was killed. There were about twelve hundred sheep.

2645. There is a great number of wild sheep there?—There were; but there are a few still scattered about.

2646. How many of these pieces of unoccupied land are there: is one in the Clarence—that between Mr. Gibson's and ?—Yes; there is one at Awatere. There were three in Awatere, but two have been cleaned. One requires to be seen to.

2647. I suppose you have often considered this matter of the wild sheep?—Yes; it is my greatest difficulty.

2648. Have you any plan to propose?—None other than to let contracts to kill them to certain men who are trustworthy runholders, supplementing some portion of the expense. The work has been done so far under supervision. The time of year has prevented the work being pursued. One job has been concluded for a portion of country. Between this and the next month or two it will be necessary to take steps to clear another portion.

2649. Are you prepared with the means for that purpose?—Not as yet.

2650. Do you know that you will be able to get the necessary authority?—I cannot be sure of it. The time of year has not arrived when it can be done properly. There is yet much snow on portions of the ground.

2651. I think it only right to ask you in regard to one statement that has been made in evidence before this Committee: It has been stated that you said you wanted to administer the Act benevolently; to clean the country so as not to ruin anybody?—I cannot recollect anything of the sort. I have said that if I could clean the country without fining I would do so; but, when it becomes necessary, fines ought to be enforced. If it were possible to do it without enforcing fines, I would do it.

2652. Did you ever check Mr. Passau in his wish to carry out the Act?—I do not recollect doing anything of the sort.

2653. Have you specified, or have you instructed the Inspectors to specify, what materials should be used in dipping?—I have always repudiated anything except lime and sulphur as the recognized cure for scab. We have always tried to prevent, if possible, the use of any patent dips; but we cannot compel people to avoid using them. I do not know whether we can compel people to use lime and sulphur. It is not stipulated by the Government.

2654. You are aware that Mr. Ingles at the present time has a separate flock on his run; that a part of his flock has a clean certificate, while the other portion is scabby?—I was made aware of that last month.

2655. Are you satisfied with that?—Not satisfied at all unless the conditions under which a clean certificate can be given are carried out.

2656. Mr. Ingles has stated his intention of separating his low lands from the high country. To do this and prevent his sheep being worked together, he was to put up new sheds and yards adjacent to the low country. There was a double line of fence and the main road between the two flocks. I think Mr. Foster, who must have understood the matter, led us to suppose that Mr. Ingles made a greater convenience of one portion of the run for another portion: that such was his object?—I am not aware.

2657. I am asking you the question because in other cases the right to keep separate flocks has been refused. The rule in one case, should it not be applicable to the other?—If he has put up a separate woolshed, separate yards, with an extra line of fence, and a main road between, I cannot see how it can be objected to.

2658. Then, you think the Inspector has a discretionary power in that case?—He has law for it, for it becomes a second property: two separate homesteads.

2659. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] In this case the clean certificate, should it be granted, was to be granted on the intimation of Mr. Ingles of his intention to erect a second homestead?—Then it should not be granted.

2660. *Hon. the Chairman.*] There is a clause in the Act to the effect that you should not give a certificate for any portion of a flock, one portion being scabby?—That clause is evidently absurd in the working, if it is looked at. A man who has only one flock can move his sheep at once, but if he has two flocks three months have to elapse, and then to be inspected before he can move them.

2661. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Why should you say it is absurd if it has not been brought in force?—No; we have not carried it out.

Mr. Walker: I think it comes to this: There was in Mr. Foster's opinion no option; the two places were different; that, being different, they would have two separate returns, and two registered brands; and, consequently, that they were two properties.

Hon. Mr. Waterhouse: In the case of Mr. Ingles the certificate was to be given on the expression of his intention to erect a second homestead.

2662. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Is it your opinion that, if a man makes separate flocks on the same run, he can demand that these flocks should be regarded by the Inspector as separate, for one of which he could give a clean certificate?—Decidedly not, unless all the conditions I have mentioned are fulfilled.

2663. Can you state where the funds of the department come from?—Out of the sheep-rates.

2664. What are the expenses as a whole—about £32,000?—Yes; last year: that is under both Acts, the Sheep Act and the Rabbit Act.

2664A Last year the expenditure exceeded the estimate, did it not?—Yes, having to deal with so much Crown lands under the Rabbit Act; also, with the desire to get rid of these evils as far as possible, extra measures were used and extra men employed.

2665. You do not know how they were drawn?—No.

2666. With regard to the case which you put before the Committee yesterday as to your position, which, you say, was defined in the evidence given in the inquiry as to Mr. Telford's case, are your answers regarding the department applicable at the present time: since that happened Mr. Maunsell has left the department I believe?—He has.

2667. What change has taken place in consequence of that?—None whatever, except that a clerk is now discharging his duties..

2667A Has he been substituted in Mr. Maunsell's place?—I suppose it can be said so.

2668. So that you now stand in the same position as regards the department that you stood in at the time of the inquiry in Mr. Telford's case?—Yes. I would wish to rectify one error I made yesterday in putting in a paper. I was asked if any officer had been appointed without my recommendation. In the answer given by me to the Committee on Mr. Telford's case it was stated that there were only two appointed, but there was one only recommended by myself.

2669. I understood you to say that there was only one appointed without your knowledge and recommendation?—Only one; and I think I answered that he did not suit, and that he left the department.

2670. Then, no change has been made in the department itself. I see here a recommendation made to that Committee. It appeared then as if this branch of the department was not in a satisfactory state: has any change taken place, such as Mr. Maunsell referred to?—No other change has taken place; the organization is now what it was then. It is a part of the Colonial Secretary's Department.

2671. Is the Minister or Mr. Cooper, as Under-Secretary, the head of the department?—Mr. Cooper is the permanent head of the department.

2672. You are the permanent head of the outside work?—I can hardly define what my position is. I am sometimes attending to office-work and sometimes travelling through the colony; if anything occurs in a place I am supposed to see what is going on.

2673. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Then, you do not exactly know what position you are in?—I stated so yesterday.

2674. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] There is no change in the department except that Mr. Maunsell has disappeared?—No. [Legal opinion of law officers handed in by the witness.]

2675. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] I would wish to ask you if you know, from experiment made, that these patent dips are useless?—The same account is given of them by the Inspectors as accords with my own experience, where you cannot use heat, which is the case with most of the patent dips. You cannot tell what the immediate effect is. You cannot tell the effect on scab. For lice and ticks some of them are pretty good, but for scab I would not use them.

2676. *Mr. Walker.*] Are you of opinion that it would be a good thing for the department that the Inspectors should be removed, like policemen, periodically?—No; the better a man knows the country the better he can do his work. Even where he is well fitted for the work it will take two or three years to acquire the necessary information as to the existence of scab in the district.

2677. Is it not possible that personal likings and dislikings may effect the best officer in the discharge of his duty?—It is quite possible. When that occurs it is proper that he should be removed; but a good deal has to be done before a person new to a district can administer the Act with the best possible results.

2678. When officers are put in charge of scabby districts, is their credit or discredit involved in their cleaning or failing to clean the district?—Decidedly.

2679. And they feel that?—They are generally put on their metal, most of them; they have quarterly reports showing what has been done.

2680. Whether fencing has been done?—Yes; whether fencing has been done. They are supposed to look after minute details, and to acquaint me with the state of the district every quarter.

2681. And yet the same districts remain scabby?—That applies only to the Kaikoura, which has been scabby on account of the reasons stated; to the Wairarapa, which I expect to see very soon clean; and to Auckland, where the state of things is exceptional, there being so many small owners, with small flocks, which they can move without giving notice; and the climate, which is favourable to the spreading of scab.

2682. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Mr. Sutton said in his evidence that he had withdrawn several informations: that these withdrawals had been reported to you?—I do not recollect the circumstances. If they were reported to me, and the circumstances stated, reasons would be given for the withdrawal or otherwise.

2683. Under the Act it is imperative to lay information against the owner at certain periods if sheep are not clean; at the end of every six months after the nine months allowed?—Yes.

2684. If the informations are withdrawn after they have been once laid, is not that, in point of fact, to defeat the intention of the Act?—I am not aware of any withdrawals.

2685. There is distinct evidence to the contrary: to the fact that there have been withdrawals?—I do not recognize withdrawals.

2686. Are you aware that there is a clause rendering it imperative for the owner to "herd and yard" where the land is unfenced: did you give notice to Mr. Ingles under the Act?—I think notice was given to him when the Act came into operation.

2687. Did you give notice to all other sheep-farmers similarly placed?—I think so. My instructions can be produced as issued at the time.

2688. Did you lay information against those sheepowners?—Yes; I laid information against Mr. Ingles, against the Waipapa, and against Gordon Gibson.

2689. Were the informations sustained?—They were. I did not lay them for not “herding and yarding.” I laid them under that portion of the 23rd clause where sufficient steps towards cleaning are not taken to the satisfaction of the Inspector.

2690. That is not what I am referring to?—It is the same clause, I think.

2691. I am referring to the 27th clause: “If any infected sheep,” &c.?—There was no information laid under that.

2692. What was the reason of that?—The notices in connection with that were served on the owners for the purpose of meeting the word “negligently.”

2693. This 27th clause requires herding on unenclosed pastures?—That clause did not come into operation in the Province of Marlborough until the latest possible date.

2694. The object of its being postponed was to give the owners of runs an opportunity of fencing in their land: did you not think it was your duty to enforce that clause regardless of consequences?—I did not think it was my duty to do any more than enforce the 23rd section, for in practically dealing with the Act that has been looked upon as a saving clause to the word “negligently,” as in the case of a man allowing his sheep to stray. That word has kept scab longer in the colony than it otherwise would have been.

2695. It is imperative. Do you think it your duty to depart from the intention of the Act—the duty imposed upon you by the Legislature?—It is the duty of the Government to give reasons for departing from the intention of the Act, if they do not give effect to the Act. That clause has not been put in force.

2696. *Captain Russell.*] You told us that certain sheep had been branded on board ship between Waitara and Manukau?—So I was informed by the captain of a steamer.

2697. By the captain of a steamer?—Yes.

2698. Did it come in your official capacity before you?—I happened to be coming down the East Coast in a boat that had been trading on the West Coast. The captain of the steamer did not tell me in my official capacity, for he did not then know who I was.

2699. Who was the Inspector that allowed sheep to embark without being branded?—It was the Inspector whose duty was to have inspected them and branded them—Mr. Hautrie.

2700. Did you take any steps in the matter?—Yes; I called for an explanation, which he gave me. I cannot say fully what it was unless I had the papers before me. It was in the nature of a denial; there was no proof except the statement of the captain. I then caused the Inspector stationed at New Plymouth to remove to Waitara, so that there should be no excuse. I was informed that the steamers had brands.

2701. *Hon. the Chairman.*] That they had them themselves?—Yes.

2702. How did they get supplied?—I made inquiry into that matter subsequently.

2703. *Captain Russell.*] You say it was a known thing that the captain of this steamer kept brands?—That was the information he gave me.

2704. Was it not your duty to make immediate inquiry?—Yes; so I did at once, furnishing a list to Mr. Lewis, the Inspector of the Port of Manukau.

2705. Is there any correspondence on the subject?—I am sure there is a correspondence on the subject.

2706. Could that be produced?—Yes, I think it can be got if it is required.

Hon. the Chairman: Does the Committee wish me to make application for it?

2707. *Mr. Walker.*] It appears to me there is evidence of a forgery here. Under the 35th and following clauses of the Act there ought to be a prosecution. How did you get the information?—I got the information accidentally.

2708. *Captain Russell.*] Why did you not follow it up, in view of the fact that the Inspector had been grossly negligent, or that the captain had been deliberately infringing the Act?—I did go a good deal further in the matter, but I could not obtain any evidence.

2709. You have said that Taranaki has been kept an infected district for the purpose of shipping sheep?—It has never been declared a clean district.

2710. Why not?—The reason was that, if it had been, Auckland would have been deprived of its sheep-trade altogether; it would have completely prevented the trade going north.

2711. Is it not by localizing the disease as much as possible that you will have a chance of cleaning: is not this rather an opening for the spread of the disease?—No; I think, with the precautions taken there is not very much danger.

2712. Suppose there had been no export of sheep to Auckland, would not Taranaki have been a clean district?—It would be, but the Proclamation has never been applied for. As a rule, if the department deem it necessary, they declare clean districts for the purpose of cleaning the country. Where it is considered necessary, a recommendation is usually made by some of the owners.

2713. If you are thoroughly aware that a district is clean, should it not be your duty to declare it clean, so as to localize the disease?—I think there are many places where you must be guided by circumstances.

Hon. Mr. Campbell: That can scarcely be considered an answer at all.

2714. *Captain Russell.*] You say that because flocks in Auckland are so easily shifted from one place to another, without the knowledge of the department, that is a reason for the continuance of the disease there. Has there been any regard to prosecutions in Auckland?—Yes; there were some at Whangarei.

2715. How long ago?—I think the last case was no great length of time since.

2716. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Has there been any to enforce the 27th clause, by which they would be compelled to herd and yard their sheep?—I think so.

2717. *Captain Russell.*] Have you any idea how many prosecutions have taken place?—There is a return which will show.

2718. Does it amount to ten cases or fifty?—I could not say exactly how many. I think there is a return of convictions and fines.

2719. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] There are no instructions for your guidance; you do what you think right?—The only instructions received are in the hands of the Chairman.

2720. *Captain Russell.*] Roughly, what are they?—I have always considered that my duties were in connection with the outside work.

2721. Do you ever go to a place like Whangarei, where you say it is impossible to fine?—I have been over the whole of the ground on two occasions—part on one occasion, and another portion on another occasion.

2722. It is your duty to go to these districts?—Yes; to report what the Inspectors have done, or to state any case to them.

2723. If you found that they have not done their duty, have you recommended their removal?—Yes.

2724. Has the Government adopted your recommendation?—Yes.

2725. Is there any insuperable difficulty in the eradication of scab?—Not insuperable, but there are many difficulties, in some places more than others.

2726. Supposing there to be sufficient men available, is it possible to extirpate scab in the most difficult places within twelve months?—So far as the holdings themselves are concerned, I should say Yes; but I think it will be two or three years before the last wild sheep will be got.

2727. That is, if the Government would kill all the wild sheep on their own grounds. Is it possible to do that?—I think it is, quite.

2728. Then, it is only this circumstance, and the question of owners of runs not having sufficient capital to work them, that retains scab in the colony?—I am led to believe so.

2729. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] I should like to ask whether you have regular returns from Inspectors in districts?—Yes; I have returns which represent all that has been done; nothing can occur without its being brought under my notice; if the diaries are correct, I know everything that is done.

2730. *Mr. Buchanan.*] In the returns before the Committee it is shown that there are eight Inspectors in Auckland?—Seven, I think; there is one, a Mr. Bonar, who receives £25 a year to assist the Inspector.

2731. *Hon. the Chairman.*] But is he or not an Inspector, drawing, you say, £25 a year?—He is not on the regular staff; he is put for a certain purpose at a certain place, drawing a certain salary.

2732. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do you recollect the number of sheep in Auckland?—It is something under three hundred thousand.

Hon. the Chairman: About two hundred and sixty thousand.

2733. *Mr. Buchanan.*] There are eight Inspectors, drawing salaries and allowances to the extent of £1,400 a year; in Napier there are nearly two millions of sheep, with only four Inspectors, with salaries and allowances between £1,000 and £1,100: can you give any explanation of these two facts: First, the long continuance of scab in Auckland, with a superabundance of Inspectors compared with the number of sheep; and, second, the fact that Napier is clean, with so large a number of sheep as compared with the relative number of Inspectors?—With reference to the working of the two places they are not parallel at all. One, Napier, is a very large clean district, every part of which can be got at easily; it is comparatively easy to deal with from end to end. In Auckland, with the exception of the Waikato, the flocks are small, the places are difficult of access; they are accessible in some places only by bad roads and water communication. These sheep are mixed with others all round the coast, where scab is all the year round. I attribute the difference to the fact of the owners and flocks being in many cases so far from supervision that people have been able to move their sheep without the knowledge of the Inspector; the fact that steamers, which are all about the coast, have been moving sheep from place to place intermediate; that, in some particulars, Auckland differs from other places, and that sheep have been brought there from other places along the coast without certificate. In many places scab has been taken without owners or Inspectors being aware of it.—So far as the outside of Auckland is concerned, I think it is nearly, if not quite, clean. I own I cannot understand why it should have been kept so long in the vicinity of Auckland itself. I cannot account for that. There is also another statement I should wish to make to the Committee. There are more sheep imported into Auckland than into any other port in the colony. It requires one man wholly and solely for this purpose, namely, to watch these imported sheep. The diaries will show that every day is taken up more or less with this duty alone.

2734. What is the date of your appointment as Superintendent Inspector?—The 1st of November, 1881.

2735. Do you remember the position of matters in Wairarapa: how many Sheep Inspectors did you find in that district?—I found two only. I think they were Mr. Sutton and Mr. Drummond.

2736. And the number of sheep would be?—About three-quarters of a million.

2737. How long did the district continue under the care of these two Inspectors?—For about eighteen months I think after my appointment: there or thereabouts.

2738. Were applications made by the Inspectors for increase of the staff?—No application was made by the Inspectors.

2739. Were either or both the Inspectors charged with duties of inspection under the Rabbit Act?—One had that duty devolving upon him.

2740. Do you consider the district as a whole a difficult one in which to bring about the eradication of scab and rabbits?—Part of it is exceedingly rough; other portions of it are very easy.

2741. Are you aware of a public meeting of the settlers with regard to the movement for

taking efficient steps for killing wild sheep on Government land?—I think so: I do not know exactly when it was.

2742. Are the Committee to assume that you thought two Inspectors sufficient to cope with the evil there, and bring about a better state of things than that of which the settlers complained?—There was somewhat of an anomaly existing in that district so far as the appointment of the Inspector was concerned. He was placed in charge, with orders to clean that district. He was supposed to be in the position of coping with the evil so far as he was concerned; if he was not, he might have applied for more assistance. If he had done so, I would have attended to his application.

2743. Have any steps been taken to kill off wild sheep?—Yes, there have.

2744. Will you tell us the circumstances?—I think I have already stated that Mr. Leverton has a contract for that purpose with the Government.

2745. Do you consider, knowing the nature of the country, its extent, and the work that has to be done, that the steps taken by the department were sufficient to insure the clearing off wild sheep?—I am informed so. I have not been informed to the contrary; the man who looks after that part or subdivision has not requested more assistance. In connection with this I may state that, in a conversation which I had with some of the older settlers up there, they said that they would prefer to have a man acquainted with the district, who would deal with matters quietly, rather than a stranger. Strangers, they appeared to think, would not know the country, and would hunt the wild sheep through their fences into their runs. They preferred to have one man who was reliable with dogs, as he would be likely to do the work more efficiently and to their satisfaction.

2746. Did it occur to you that this matter might have been indefinitely postponed because of the wish of these settlers to have only one man employed in killing off these wild sheep, the consequence being to prevent the district being clean, or to delay that result for some time?—I was guided by the Inspectors not having requested me to put on more men; I trusted to them and to the settlers themselves for information of that sort.

2747. *Hon. the Chairman.*] With regard to killing sheep in the Wairarapa bush, are you satisfied that none of the runholders are allowing such sheep going on to their runs, and so keeping up their stock?—The whole of the country is not fenced off. I think it has cost one settler £100 a mile to convey fencing material on to a portion of this run. It is clean. If the wild sheep were to go back it would be useless.

2748. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Do you know the district well?—Pretty well.

2749. Do you know Mr. Miles?—I know that he is a Sheep and Rabbit Inspector.

2750. How many men has he?—He has three men to meet the requirements of his district.

2751. Do you know Mr. Hickson?—Yes.

2752. Do you think him very competent?—There have been no complaints made against him. There might be a more competent man. He has been a Civil servant for many years. He never had a charge made against him, except that at one time he was tardy in his work; but that I was only told. Now, I believe, there is no complaint against him.

2753. Did you not dismiss Mr. Macdonald?—I did not dismiss him. I intimated to him that he should resign.

2754. On what grounds?—He had, I believed, become unfit for his duty by age. He was incapable of performing his work. He was instructed to go into the back country to see if there was any invasion of rabbits, but he could not; he was physically incapable of doing the work.

2755. As to the man that at present occupies his place, does he do it?—He does; it was distinctly stipulated that, if at any moment he should be found incapable of doing the work, his engagement was at an end.

2756. Did you not pay Macdonald £400 when he retired?—No; I had nothing to do with that.

2757. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Are you aware that he got £400?—I cannot say that I am aware of it. The correspondence passed through my hands, but it did not come under my observation.

2758. Let us distinctly understand what he was paid £400 for?—I cannot at the present time distinctly state.

2759. In your ordinary knowledge, do you know that you paid him £400?—I do not positively recollect.

2760. Was he not paid £400?—I believe he was, but I should not like to assert it. I do not know what the amount was.

2761. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Then, you do not actually know?—No.

2762. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Who paid him?—I do not know who paid him. The correspondence would pass through the office.

Hon. Mr. Campbell: I know for a positive fact that he was paid £400; and he retired from the service in order to make room for another person.

2763. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Mr. Foster was asked why he had not enforced the 26th clause against a flockowner who was running rams with his sheep, and his answer was because the rams were destroyed: can you give any explanation?—I do not see where that can come in. I have a distinct recollection that, after a certain date, the clauses suspended in the Act were to be rigidly enforced.

2764. Did you issue instructions to that effect?—Yes.

2765. If they were not carried out you would know?—I do not know of a case.

2766. Were you aware that the 26th clause was not enforced in Marlborough?—That is the only place I know of where certain clauses were suspended.

2767. Are you aware that every clause in this Act was considered by gentlemen who might be considered "expert" in regard to this matter; that it was their intention that the Act should be administered strictly, so that scab might be stamped out of the colony?—I am aware of that.

2768. Are you aware that the Amuri County is as difficult to be cleaned as Marlborough?—I must differ from you in that.

2769. Are you aware that this colony has suffered loss at the present moment; that it is impossible to export sheep to New South Wales, where they have been fetching a very high price, in consequence of New Zealand being scabby?—So I hear.

2770. With reference to something you said about Wairarapa: You said that you did not consider it your duty to follow up indefinite charges against an Inspector?—I meant upon hearsay; that is not permitted in the Civil Service; but, if any irregularity were shown by that officer in carrying out his duty, that would be a matter of the utmost importance, and I should inquire into it, if it came to my knowledge.

2771. What do you mean by “indefinite” charges?—Complaints upon which I could not frame any charge against the officer concerned. Any person can make a charge without having a particle of evidence. Complaints upon hearsay have often nothing to sustain them. I could not possibly follow up a complaint made upon hearsay.

2772. Then, as to the qualification of candidates for the office of Inspector, I think you said the applications were taken and considered according to seniority?—Yes; if a person applied a couple of years before, if his qualification were satisfactory, he would be appointed before a person who had applied later.

2773. You said that one man was employed in Wairarapa to destroy wild sheep?—That was a contract entered into; it would be for two years.

2774. Are you aware that such a contract may exist for twenty years?—No, I do not think so. It depends upon the local Inspector.

2775. Why not stamp the disease out at once?—The features of the country are such that it would be impossible to do it. Great care is necessary in the selection of a person to be employed in such work. You must have a man acquainted with the district. A person who knew nothing about this business of killing wild sheep would be likely to do more harm than good. If he were to rush these sheep through fences on to runs the injury done would be very great. I can only judge by what has already taken place. It was the best proceeding that could be taken.

2776. Having found that Mr. Sutton had not reported what flocks were infected, why did you not dismiss him at once?—The whole of the correspondence is on the table. When Mr. Sutton went there he had a difficult district to deal with; he had a great deal to contend with. It was simply the charge that was made against him. There never had been any previous charge made against him. I believe that he was the victim of mischance. There was some evidence as to his efficiency; he was always considered a good man.

2777. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I would draw your attention to a matter in connection with this 26th clause: It is provided that the Governor may further suspend the operation of the 26th clause until 1885 in any subdivision of Auckland, Taranaki, Nelson, or Marlborough. Can you state whether any Proclamation has been made for the suspension of this clause until 1885?—No.

2778. How long was it suspended in the first instance?—To the latter end of 1880 or the beginning of 1881.

2779. So that it has actually been in force?—Yes.

2780. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] Mr. Foster told the Committee that he was averse to the remission of fines: was the matter referred to you as to these fines in the Kaikouras?—The matter was referred to me in connection with those first fines to which I have already alluded in my evidence.

2781. Which?—These were cases in which informations were laid for not taking sufficient means, not for being owners of scabby sheep.

2782. Which were they?—Gibson and Ingles. They were brought before the nine months because the Court would not sit for another three months. We wished to show a distinction between those who were doing something towards cleaning their sheep and those who were doing nothing. In one case the owner had put up fifteen miles of fence, and 20,000 of his sheep were reported to be clean.

2783. Did you recommend that the fine against Mr. Ingles should be enforced?—The Inspector was not prepared to swear to certain things. In the absence of proof in one case, and in view of a large number of sheep being cleaned in the other, I recommended that the first fines in both cases should be remitted. It was intended to bring the whole matter before the House.

THURSDAY, 2ND OCTOBER, 1884.

Mr. BAYLY, examination continued.

[The witness handed in papers relating to the branding of sheep on board trading steamers on the West Coast, also relating to the transport of sheep from Wanganui to Auckland and ports intermediate.]

2784. *Hon. the Chairman.*] When you said the Government brand was used on private steamers, did I understand you to say they were used with authority?—I do not think so, but these papers will explain how it occurred. The Inspector lived some distance from Waitara. He used to see some five or six hundred sheep for embarkation. He used to inspect these, and he would then empower a man to see the ship off. This man was supposed to brand the sheep, but, instead of doing so, he allowed some one of the persons on board to do it, so I heard. He used to put the sheep on himself in forties or fifties, and to save time they were branded in this way. That was the information I received.

2785. I suppose you made inquiries upon this matter?—I did.

2786. Did you ascertain that the Inspector signed a blank certificate?—He did; the papers are there.

2787. Is that Inspector still in the service?—He is still in the service. The papers will explain the matter fully.

2788. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] He is actually in the service still?—Yes.

2789. He is in the same place?—Yes.

2790. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Has the captain committed forgery?—No; he did not commit forgery.

2791. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you know whether it mentioned whose sheep they were, what was the character of them, or if he left the number?—He left the number; he signed it in blank; he left the number of the certificate with his agent.

2792. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Do you think he should have been dismissed at once?—I recommended that his services should be dispensed with, and that Mr. Price, who took his place, should be retained.

2793. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Did he leave blank certificates for the purpose with his agent?—This was signed in blank,

2794. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Why were his services not dispensed with?—I cannot tell.

2795. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Can you explain at what date this took place?—The dates are there in the correspondence.

2796. Within what time has it been?—It is about twelve months ago; rather more than twelve months ago.

2797. *Captain Russell.*] What is the date given in the correspondence?—March 13, 1882.

2798. *Hon. the Chairman.*] It is some considerable time ago?—I accidentally heard it, and inquired into the matter.

2799. And you ascertained that the Inspector gave certificates in blank, and allowed the captain of the vessel to brand on board his steamer?—He did not allow the captain to do it. The captain did not do it; but the Inspector signed the certificates in blank, and allowed the branding to take place on board the ship.

2800. When was that?—Some little time over two years ago.

2801. When did you find that out?—When I was coming down the other coast.

2802. I want to know what date?—It would be sometime in November, 1882—either October or November, 1882.

2803. What course did you then take?—I wrote to Mr. Hatley, and asked him to remove to Waitara, but in the meantime the matter became complicated, to a certain extent, by his being compelled to go away altogether on leave. While he was away on leave I sent another Inspector to take up his duties. During the time he was on leave a good deal of further information was obtained.

2804. You did not suspend Mr. Hatley?—No; I did not.

2805. Would it be done in the ordinary course?—He was away at the time. The whole matter was sifted. When we got to the bottom of it I recommended that his services should be dispensed with. Then the other Inspector took his place, whose services I recommended the Government should retain—Mr. Price.

2806. There is a recommendation as to an amendment in the Act, that it should compel sheep to be dipped before passing through clean flocks in an infected district. That appears to be a matter of considerable importance. Mr. Foster writes drawing attention to the risk that is run, no provision being in the Act to empower the Inspector to cause sheep which do not hold a clean certificate to be dipped?—It is very necessary that such should be done.

2807. You provided for that in the amendment of the Act you submitted to the Government, but I could not find it?—I think it is in that clause where it is provided that no sheep whatever should be removed from any station that had been infected before six months. Dipping, under supervision of the Inspector, might be included with great advantage.

Hon. the Chairman.: That meets the case as put by Mr. Foster.

Captain Russell.: Mr. Bayly might tell the Committee whether the officer retiring on account of ill-health is now fit for duty.

2808. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Did he return to the service?—At the expiration of his leave, Mr. Price was removed to the place he had charge of. Mr. Price was removed to Nelson.

2809. What was the illness he was suffering from?—He is almost a cripple; he suffers from rheumatism.

2810. You recommended that he should leave the service?—Yes.

2811. No steps were taken on that?—None.

2812. I think you told us yesterday that Mr. Macdonald was in the service down south, and that he is no longer in the service now?—No; he is not.

2813. Did he retire of his own wish?—No; he did not.

2814. Will you say why he left the service?—He was physically incapable of performing his duties.

2815. Was it on your recommendation that he retired?—It was on this account: That he was instructed on several occasions to attend to work in the back portion of the district; he never did so; in fact, he was incapable of getting through. He was close on to seventy years of age or thereabouts to my knowledge. I had known him for several years; he was unfit for anything like active work.

2816. What course did you take in regard to that?—I brought the matter under the notice of the Government on several occasions. I wrote to Mr. Macdonald defining the duties which he had to perform. He could not perform them.

2817. You then recommended formally to the Government that he should retire?—I did

2818. Was there any condition attached to that recommendation?—I believe Mr. Macdonald has a retiring allowance.

2819. How long had he been in the service?—I think, as nearly as I can recollect, since 1871.

2820. When did he retire?—At the beginning of 1883.

2821. Was he an Inspector under the Provincial Act?—Yes.

2822. What would be the allowance?—A month's salary for every year he had served.

2823. That would be about one year's salary?—Yes.

2824. What did he receive?—£400.

2825. What did he retire upon?—A year's salary.

2826. *Hon. the Chairman.*] With regard to lice in sheep: do you think it would be advisable to bring in an amendment to the Act, by which Inspectors would be empowered to compel sheep-owners to dip for lice in sheep without cancelling the certificate for scab?—I have already suggested clauses almost in the very words you have just put it—in this way, that if the Inspector should be satisfied that the run-sheep were infected with lice he would give notice to dip.

2827. You would put infection with lice on a somewhat different footing? Yes; on a different footing.

2828. I would ask you another question in regard to Mr. Hately. I see, in regard to his leave of absence, that he first got leave of absence; then, for some reason or other, he made another application: was he able to make use of his leave in the first instance: do you know the circumstances?—I think it was as you state.

2829. There was some reason?—He was too ill to travel.

2830. He said that unless he got full pay he would not be able to take advantage of his leave?—Yes.

2831. He got full pay for three months?—Yes.

2832. Half-pay for five months?—Yes.

2833. Is that unusual?—Yes; except under special circumstances.

2834. There were special circumstances you think in this case?—Yes; he was very ill.

2835. Do you think he is able to do his duties now?—He is able to do the port work where he is.

2836. What age is he?—He is a man of from fifty-one to fifty-five years of age

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

II.—RABBITS.

WEDNESDAY, 10TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. W. BEETHAM, examined.

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you nothing to say, Mr. Beetham, as to rabbits?—They are a very great nuisance.

1A. *Mr. Buchanan.*] What is your opinion as to the best means of getting rid of the nuisance?—Ferrets, stoats, and weasels; I do not think that traps and rabbiters are the best means to use. We have killed upwards of 10,000 rabbits on a property lately purchased within three miles of Masterton, by destroying their cover. Dogs do not clear them all out of the warren. I prefer to trust to their natural enemies.

THURSDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 1884 (Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON, Chairman).

Mr. W. D. WOOD, examined.

1B. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I wish to ask you for some information in regard to the rabbit nuisance. Do you regard the working of the Act in this respect as satisfactory?—Yes.

2. You have a great number of rabbits on your run: Are they on the increase or decrease?—They are on the decrease.

3. How have they been so decreased?—With poison and ferrets.

4. Do you think that is the most satisfactory way of dealing with them?—I think it is the most satisfactory way.

5. Are you satisfied with the way the Act is carried out?—No; I think there ought to be some properly-defined method of carrying it out. There is no uniform system adopted. The Superintendents or Sub-Superintendents (I do not know what to call them) adopt different systems.

6. Then you have more than one person acting as Inspector or Sub-Inspector in the district?—Yes.

7. Do you think that is not satisfactory?—I think the Inspectors ought to recognize some definite method of destroying rabbits. For instance, some Inspectors insist on using traps and rabbiters to exterminate rabbits; others say that poison or ferrets is the best means.

8. That is, while one recommends poison or some other means, another encourages some other plan?—Yes. Where ferrets are turned out it is a suicidal policy to catch rabbits with traps, for you must destroy your ferrets in the same traps. On my property and the adjoining property it was insisted that rabbiters and traps should be used. In the course of seventeen days fifteen ferrets were trapped.

9. Of course they were killed?—Yes; the ferrets were killed. Besides, rabbiters are somewhat hostile to ferrets. They consider the ferrets interfere with their means of living. They kill them if they can, because they consider they take away their means of living.

10. Do you recommend that one uniform method should be adopted through the whole of a district, and that should be by poisoning?—Yes; with ferrets and cats and the natural enemies of the rabbit.

11. Have you turned out many ferrets in your district?—Yes; about a hundred a year. Mr. Bullen turns out 200 every year. Mr. Bullen will not allow a rabbit on his place. The rabbit will only stay on the ground while he can earn good wages. After that, he says "It does not answer my purpose to remain," and he goes away. In my opinion rabbits will never be exterminated by employing rabbiters and traps.

Hon. Mr. Campbell: I quite agree with you.

12. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you know whether ferrets increase in a wild state?—I believe they do. We have found on our place a nest with five or six young ferrets in it. Ferrets also travel a good way. I have a cage in which about forty ferrets are being reared. One night a young ferret walks up: he went in with the others and could not get out again. He was at first quite wild. We had him a week or two, after which he was turned out with the others.

13. Have you tried weasels or stoats?—I have not.

14. *Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore.*] How about the mongoose?—Mr. Bullen got out some mongooses: a whole family of them. One of them escaped, and he then let the others out. I do not know how they would act.

15. The mongoose comes from a different climate. It is a question whether he could stand the cold. Is there any evidence of the ferret doing injury to sheep?—Not that I am aware of.

16. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you any amendment in the Act, or as to the working of the Act, to offer, beyond those which you have already referred to?—I think not.

17. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Is the injury done by rabbits sufficient to affect the amount of feed upon your run?—Not now to any extent. When I went there first there was not a blade of grass to be seen in some places; they had destroyed it all. We have destroyed about one hundred thousand.

18. Are you put to expense now by the rabbit-pest?—Yes.

19. How many men do you employ?—Only a few men.

20. The rabbit will not take the poison if laid on the dry ground?—My experience is that they will take it always if laid on their feeding-ground. They have taken it when the phosphorus has even set fire to the grass.

21. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you tried rhodium?—Yes, we have tried rhodium and sugar; we have mixed them. My son finds no difference whether it is mixed with sugar or not; they seemed to eat it as well one way as the other.

22. In summer they might require some inducement to take it?—My son's experience is that they will take it mixed or unmixed with sugar.

23. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Do you find that the sheep eat the poisoned grain?—For our part we lay it outside the fence where there are no sheep; or, where there are sheep in an enclosure, we take them out. I think the danger would be reduced to a minimum if the grain, instead of being laid in little heaps, were scattered.

24. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] I see it stated that a great advantage has been derived from driving a plough-line along the earth?—I have heard of it, but I have not tried it.

25. *Hon. the Chairman.*] It is curious that if you turn up the soil rabbits will go to it: they will go to an upturned sod sooner than to parts not so upturned.

Witness: I would like to put it on record that I think wheat is preferable to oats, for where we put oats mixed with wheat we have generally found that the wheat is eaten and the oats left by the rabbits.

25. *Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore.*] Has nobody tried rabbit-nets?—Yes, it has been tried, but it is a very slow process.

27. *Mr. Harper.*] Did not Mr. Bullen try it at one time?—I am not sure. Where rabbits are plentiful it might be effectual, but when scarce I do not think it is.

28. *Hon. Mr. Nurse.*] Do you think that the present Act is oppressive as allowing one person to recommend one thing and another another?—I suggest that one course of action should be taken by all the Inspectors, who, I think, should not have the power of insisting on rabbiters or traps being used.

29. They insist on other things as well, such as laying poison where you do not wish to lay it. You said that you did not know that sheep were poisoned by it?—I have.

30. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Complaint has been made of two sections of the Rabbit Act, the first of which is that, immediately on the service of such notice under it, if one or more owners did not do all such matters as in the opinion of the Inspectors might be necessary, do you think that ought to be operative?—Unless you have some stringent Act which will compel a man to exterminate rabbits, he will not do it, he will evade it.

31. Perhaps this is what you mean: That you believe in the Inspectors having large powers, but you did not think these powers should extend to insisting upon any particular method?—I think there should be some particular method that should be carried out by all Inspectors alike: there should be one uniform method of exterminating the rabbit- nuisance. I think this Committee, in getting all the information that can be had on this subject, will be able in their report to decide what will be the best method that should be adhered to by all Inspectors alike. At present, if one Inspector recommends one thing, another may insist upon the opposite.

32. Complaint has been made of the absolute power given to the Inspectors by sections 9 and 10. Do you think such powers should vest in the Inspectors, or in the Resident Magistrate, for instance?—In the Resident Magistrate.

33. What is your opinion?—I think it would be better to vest in the Resident Magistrate upon conviction, for some of these Sub-Inspectors are men of very little note. Some of them are men who do not care to do anything else so long as they can get a few shillings a day. They are not the persons to administer the law. I think it is best for the Resident Magistrate to decide in all such cases rather than the Sub-Inspector.

34. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Sub-Inspectors are sometimes rabbiters themselves?—I believe so.

35. *Mr. Buchanan.*] In last year's report I find the remarks of the Inspector. He says that wild ferrets are numerous in Southland; and he has no opinion of the ferret as the natural enemy of the rabbit. What do you say?—I should say that he knew very little about it. I should be disposed to think that he was interested in some other method.

36. Generally, is it your opinion that poison, with the ferret, has been the most successful method of killing rabbits?—Yes; on Mr. Bullen's run, which adjoins mine, it has been found so; also on my run. It was said at one time that you could scarcely fire a gun off that you would not kill half a dozen rabbits. You may guess from that that they were pretty numerous. They have been almost all exterminated by poison and the ferret. Mr. Bullen uses no other means. He has one man whom he calls his rabbitier; but this man breeds the ferrets. He also shoots rabbits. I have men who have shot a good many, and killed them in every possible way, but I depend most on the poison and the ferrets. In many instances the small farmers will not kill rabbits except in winter, when the skins are worth 4d. or 5d. each. Consequently, they breed up in the summer as many as are killed in the winter.

37. Are complaints as to the destruction of fowls by ferrets numerous from small farmers?—I have not heard any.

38. Have you heard of any lambs being killed by ferrets?—I have neither known nor heard of them, if there were any. Mr. Bullen's overseer told me that he found ferrets where rabbits were scarce, following the plough and eating worms.

39. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Are there any unoccupied lands in your district, that is, lands not in use?—Yes. There are also some reserves about, where the Government Inspector takes the poison to.

40. Are they paid for killing or taking the necessary steps to kill rabbits?—Yes.

FRIDAY, 12TH SEPTEMBER 1884

Mr. WALTER GIBSON, examined.

41. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Will you state your experience as to rabbits?—When I took possession of these runs, a block of country fourteen miles long by twelve miles wide was infested with rabbits.

I at once started poisoning, and poisoned very successfully. I purchased all the ferrets I could get and turned them out. Since then I have been working with ferrets, and have been breeding a large number this year. The whole of that country has been cleared pretty well of rabbits. So long as we employed rabbiters the rabbits increased instead of diminishing, inasmuch as it seemed as if the rabbiters would kill the natural enemies of the rabbit—the ferrets, cats, and wekas.

42. This ground you spoke of, is it higher up or lower down the slope?—The rabbits do not do much damage in the high, snowy country; they are thicker in the lower ground. Men are employed in putting poison over the country.

43. When you get rid of rabbits from the lower grounds, do you find that you get fresh detachments of them from above?—We send ferrets out. They kill all the young ones, consequently the whole country is now practically free from them. On a small area of ground two miles and a half by one mile 4,000 skins were found in a day. That was the first time that ground was poisoned.

44. With regard to your neighbour, Mr. Bullen?—Mr. Bullen has been breeding ferrets for ten years. Whenever he sees a colony of rabbits he sends ferrets out.

45. Do you think the Rabbit Act is working fairly?—I do not think so in some parts of the colony. I have no knowledge of my own, but I am told that the Inspectors compel rabbiters to be put on. Doing so, I think, only increases the pest.

46. What would you suggest instead?—I should suggest that they should be compelled to lay poison, and the breeding of ferrets.

47. Is that the only remedy you would suggest to be adopted all over the colony?—We find that answer in the Kaikouras. The district was once almost ruined by rabbits. All the ground they infested was rendered perfectly barren. It was quite a desert owing to rabbits. It is now covered with grass.

48. You have a large number of ferrets?—I shall breed a thousand this year.

49. Have you any reason to suppose that they kill sheep or lambs?—I have never known them to kill sheep or lambs.

50. Would you be able to tell whether a sheep or lamb was killed by ferrets or not?—I should imagine so; you would see the remains.

51. Have you any reason to suspect that they do?—No. In some parts of the year, when the ferrets are hard up for food, they have been known to follow the plough, killing worms, and feeding on them.

52. Do you know anything about any other natural enemies of the rabbit. I have never seen them in New Zealand?—In the old country there are others very destructive to the rabbit. If introduced here they might turn out to be a nuisance.

53. Does that answer apply to ferrets?—The reply to that is that they have freed the country to a great extent of rabbits.

54. Can the supply be kept up; may they not become scarce?—The supply can be kept up by continually breeding them.

55. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] I was going to ask if the witness ever noticed that rabbits are given to one particular kind of soil, for you will see one part of a run very much more infested than another, which has very few rabbits on it?—The only ground they do not care about is swampy land. If they get any dry land in the country they infest the whole of it in preference.

56. I know a run in Marlborough where there were very few rabbits for ten or twelve years, and all at once they increased enormously. We have had them in our country, but they never increased so as to be a nuisance?—Unless the country is very wet they may commence to increase at any time.

57. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You say that Mr. Bullen has been turning out ferrets for ten years; have you any reason whatever to think that Mr. Bullen has suffered any damage from ferrets; do you know whether they kill lambs?—No; I never saw a ferret touch a lamb.

58. Do you think that if any damage has arisen in Mr. Bullen's case you would fail to hear of it?—I should be certain to have heard of it?

59. You said; in the case of cats, stoats, and weasels, they might be as troublesome, because not so easily to be got rid of, as the ferrets?—Yes; they might be a nuisance.

60. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] What do you think about wekas?—The ferrets will destroy all the wekas.

61. What else have you to say about ferrets; will they destroy game or birds?—All birds that build their nests on the ground—the lark or any other that builds on the ground—disappear.

62. *Mr. Harper.*] Could you tell whether a lamb had been attacked by a ferret and killed; whether there was any peculiar mark left: the ferret only sucks the blood?—We would take care to examine the lamb if we found it had any marks, and no doubt we could find the mark if it had been killed by a ferret.

Mr. H. INGLES, examined.

63. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you many rabbits now?—No, very few. We have broken the neck of the nuisance, I believe. It is, however, a slight tax upon us still. We lay poison for them almost constantly.

64. Have you ferrets?—Yes.

65. Do they work effectually?—Yes; I know some blocks that have been cleared of rabbits. But I do not think the ferrets themselves would clear them. Ferrets come in very useful after the number of rabbits has become less.

66. That is, you poison first, and then you use the ferret?—Yes.

67. Do you find rabbiters of any use?—Quite the reverse.

68. Are ferrets caught in traps set for rabbits?—I believe so.

69. Are they wild ferrets?—Yes. It is a very ticklish question this of trapping, but I do not see why a man should not be allowed to trap in his own country if he likes.

70. Do you think it desirable that Inspectors should direct what course should be adopted?

—Here, again, I do not think the department good enough. In different parts of the country it is directed that different things should be done. Mr. Bayly, in one place, is giving a chance of seeing what the ferret will do. In Otago the runholders are ordered to put on rabbiters. If Marlborough is allowed to adopt one method, I do not see why it should not be allowed in Otago.

71. Do you think it would be an advantage to put on rabbiters?—No.

72. Do you think it advisable that the Inspector should have power to say what should be done? Would it be better to have some specific method prescribed?—That would be a very difficult thing.

73. Do you think there is any objection to Sheep Inspectors being Rabbit Inspectors?—In places where sheep are clean the rabbits would be his chief work; in places which are not clean his work will be greater; but, in a country like ours, where the duties are entirely different, I think so.

74. Do you lay poison?—Yes.

75. Do you mix it with anything?—Yes; rhodium.

76. How long will poison retain its power?—It depends on the weather. With oats it will retain its power longer than with wheat.

77. Do ferrets attack lambs or sheep?—I have no reason to think so.

78. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Do you think you would keep down rabbits if you were obliged to keep rabbiters?—Their object, of course, is to have lots of rabbits.

79. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Has the Rabbit Act worked well in your district?—The Rabbit Act has worked very well with us, chiefly because we have a very good man. We want only to have the reserve and Crown lands clean.

80. How is that; do the Government assist you?—Certainly. Along the sandhills and on reserves it is done by the Government.

81. Do not the rabbits go up the hill?—Yes, on some hills.

82. Is there a different soil? Is that the way you account for it?—I have known rabbits on a particular run greatly increase. On another they would scarcely go on it.

83. Have you ever heard of a disease among rabbits?—I have heard of it.

MONDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. G. F. BULLEN, examined.

84. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Will you give us some account of your experience as regards rabbits in your district: you had a great number, had you not?—When I went there they were pretty well confined to the Swyncombe Run. There was a few in our country. In two or three years they began to spread rapidly. I put on rabbiters, but the rabbits did not decrease; on the contrary, they kept increasing. I put on more men. I saw that it was becoming a serious pest, and that there would be great difficulty in treating it if allowed to spread. There was a penalty against turning out ferrets at that time. I turned out the ferrets without consulting any one or letting any one know anything about it, and kept the matter quiet for some time. I soon saw that dealing with the rabbits by means of their natural enemies was the best cure. I found that the ferrets also increased rapidly in a wild state. I had previously a good many rabbiters. I soon found that the rabbiters were killing cats, wekas, and everything in fact that killed the rabbit. I caught them killing them. I tested them in every way, and I knew they were killing them in every way. I resolved to pay them off, and depend on ferrets. I sent home to England and bought some—600; that was the first shipment. All of them died. We started again with 700, and out of that number we succeeded in getting two ferrets and two weasels.

85. *Hon. R. Campbell.*] Out of the 1,300?—Out of the 1,300. Fortunately they were two very valuable ferrets, being a first cross between the pole-cat; therefore we got a hardy class of ferret. The ferret has done very well with us; in fact, they have annihilated the rabbits on 90,000 acres of country. We have no rabbits. We keep no rabbiters. We never poisoned that country. We depend entirely on the ferrets. Every year we try to breed about 200. I have been letting my friends have some. I am not going to breed so many this year. It is distinctly understood that no trapping should be put down. There is a small cockatoo settler in the neighbourhood. He keeps a lot of pigs, and there are a few rabbits there. He managed to pass the Inspector, who visited his place. These rabbits go on to the ground of the neighbouring farmers. The Inspector went to him and said, "You must kill these rabbits." Traps were put down, and in less than three weeks he caught seventeen ferrets. He told me what he was doing, and we told him that he must stop immediately. He also caught a mongoose. It was one that got away. We were very sorry that it so happened, for a mongoose costs a good bit of money.

86. What is your experience of mongoose?—I have no experience. I know they will kill rabbits. I also know that they are very active, and catch them in the open.

87. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Is that the small mongoose?—It was from the Himalayas.

88. Did you get out many mongoose?—I succeeded in getting out nine or ten.

89. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do they get away on the run?—Yes.

90. You began to use ferrets at an early date, so that you never had occasion to poison?—Not by phosphorus. I had been poisoning grain with strychnine, but I found by putting it down I was likely to kill the ferrets. I was afraid.

91. Ferrets only suck the blood of rabbits, is that so?—They eat rabbits as well.

92. Do you draw a conclusion from that that it is necessary not to poison?—No; that is to say, phosphorus could not hurt; but it will still be necessary to poison. Where rabbits are in large numbers the ferrets alone would not be able to keep their number down.

93. Do you think that the Act should provide that the Inspectors should direct one method of killing rabbits?—I think the Government should say that there should be only one way of poisoning, and that should be by phosphorus, and the natural enemies of the rabbit could do the rest. I should lay it down that the Inspector should have no chance of deviating.

94. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] Have you seen the rabbits at Lake District?—Yes.

95. Were they as thick as you saw them in the South, on your country?—No.

96. They never took possession of the country?—They were never allowed to.

97. It is interesting to know what ferrets can do, and whether they are certain; whether they answer the purpose. Are rabbits very numerous in any part of your country?—I have seen 5,000 killed on one little spur.

98. Are ferrets increasing or dying? When food is scarce will they attack sheep or lambs?—All the past winter we have been killing pigs that they should have food to carry them over the winter.

99. Would they have perished but for that?—I believe we have lost several. I have met with those who say that they will attack lambs. I think it is possible they would attack lambs. But I am quite sure that ferrets will not do a twentieth part of the harm that rabbits do. Part of the success of the Rabbit Act depends on its administration, Our experience is that the Inspectors have too much power. They have exercised their powers wrongfully, and abused it.

100. *Captain Russell*: Will you tell us the altitude of parts of your district above the sea-level?—Certainly; 5,000 feet.

101. *Mr. J. C. Buckland*.] Have you any basis upon which to tell us the cost of breeding ferrets?—Last year I had to kill sheep for them. I could not get other meat for them. The cost is not much. They cost me about 15s. a year, simply because there are no rabbits to feed them.

102. *Captain Russell*.] If you had rabbits you could breed them for 5s. or 6s.?—Yes.

103. Do they breed young?—Yes.

104. I think you expect to get nine in the year from the one female?—You might get two litters, but you cannot expect it.

105. You say you have no experience of ferrets attacking sheep or lambs. Do you think they would do so?—They must live on something. I do not doubt that they might.

106. How would that effect game and native birds?—There is no game bird there.

107. Have you any wekas?—Not one.

108. You say there is only one way of dealing with the rabbit-pest, and that is by poisoning with phosphorus, and then with the natural enemies of the rabbit?—Yes.

109. Will that apply to the lowlands?—Yes; to all kind of country.

110. Do you think this applicable to the richer land near the sea-level?—Yes; by using some sugar and rhodium to make it sweeter and nicer for them.

111. *Hon. the Chairman*.] Do you think they can be induced to take the poison all the year round?—Yes; of course the winter is the best time. I never saw such a wonderful clearance as was made at Flaxbourne.

112. Are you aware that the Government have recently brought out ninety-one weasels and stoats?—I have heard so.

113. Were any of them offered to you?—No.

114. Would you be surprised to hear that the Inspectors have turned them out in certain places?—If there are any rabbiters there they will be all destroyed.

115. *Captain Russell*.] Do you think that any attempt to extirpate rabbits by employing rabbiters will be a failure?—I think that rabbiters are specially hostile to the life of the ferret.

116. *Mr. Lance*.] You were asked if you were acquainted with the condition of the country round Wakatip: do you think the same method would answer there as in the Kaikouras?—Yes; I am perfectly certain.

117. *Mr. Dobson*.] You say you are breeding less ferrets this year: do you mean to leave off breeding?—Not entirely, in case there should be a spot where it would be necessary to turn them out upon.

118. Can you form no estimate of the number of wild ferrets on the run?—No.

119. *Hon. R. Campbell*.]—Are there a thousand?—I believe there are a thousand.

120. *Hon. the Chairman*.]—You mention the fact that a large number of ferrets died on the way out: was that from distemper?—Yes.

121. Do they suffer from distemper?—Yes; four years ago the distemper was very bad among ferrets.

122. Was that among those in captivity or out on the run?—Out on the run: you could see them by the hundred dead. In the following year the rabbits increased.

123. Do you infer that as a consequence of the disappearance of so many ferrets?—Yes; in consequence of that.

124. *Hon. Captain Fraser*.]—What food is given to ferrets?—The inside of sheep or anything. The captain of a ship told me he fed them almost entirely on porridge.

125. *Hon. the Chairman*.]—I have heard that if they are brought up on food of that description they are not fierce enough: what do you feed yours upon?—We always feed them upon meat and milk.

126. Have you ever heard of a disease among rabbits?—I have heard some persons speak of it, but I do not know anything of it.

127. Do you see any reason why persons appointed under the Sheep Act as Inspectors should combine two sets of duties, or that there should be separate officers under the Rabbit Act?—Where scab is prevalent the Inspector of sheep has quite enough to attend to.

128. Is there anything in regard to rabbits that you would recommend in the working of the Act?—I think that all parties should be compelled to clear alike; there is one party, or set of people, who will neither bring ferrets into the country or use poison for the purpose of clearing.

129. They can be had up—that is, prosecuted?—If the Act is not enforced, one man who holds only about 150 acres is keeping a whole country full of rabbits.

130. There is a clause in the Scab Act that, if the Inspector will not take proceedings, any sheepowner may take such steps: is there any thing corresponding to that in the Rabbit Act?—I do not know: I cannot say.

131. Is it entirely left to the Inspector to take proceedings, or can any private individual

interested direct proceedings to be taken?—It is a very painful thing for a private individual to direct that proceedings should be taken.

132. Then, where there is an Inspector, it is his duty to do that?—I think so. According to my experience a private individual can only move the Inspector, and that is I believe the way the Inspector is moved.

133. *Hon. the Chairman.*]—You think then that the Act should be put strictly in force, and that the Inspector is the proper person in whose hands the Act is placed for administration?—I do.

TUESDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. CORBETT, examined.

134. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Can you give us any information about rabbits?—We have got rabbits. We have not been visited by any Inspector.

135. Are they numerous?—They were at one time numerous; but we have been breeding ferrets. We have two hundred in hand now.

136. Do you find they succeed well in a wild state?—Yes. Mr. Bullen gave me the idea. I am not afraid of the rabbits; I think they can be easily kept under.

137. Have you anything to say as to the Rabbit Act?—No. They have left us alone. There is one of our own men who goes out and shoots.

138. Do you find your ferrets suffer from distemper?—They have never had it. I have heard of it. I have heard of places where they have tried to keep ferrets, but they were not successful. Ferrets require great care. We have a man attending to them, and doing nothing else.

139. What has it cost you?—It cost us last year about £200.

140. What can you breed them for?—They cost us £1 each this year; but that was caused by preliminary expenses. They will not cost so much in the future.

141. Do you use poison?—Yes; but we did not poison this year. We did not see that it was necessary. We used arsenic and carrots; also phosphorized oats and wheat, when we had the rabbits more numerous three years ago. We used to lay carrots one day, and another day oats.

142. Which did you find best?—I think the oats are best. It lasts longer.

143. As to phosphorus, what is your opinion of that? Have you used any of that?—Yes.

144. Which do you think best with phosphorus?—I think the oats.

145. You mean that oats steeped in phosphorus will retain the poison longer than wheat?—I think so.

146. Do you say they take the oats more readily?—They take it very readily; they take it best.

147. *Mr. Dodson.*] Do you slice the carrots?—Yes; I put them in a box and chop them up; but they must not be touched with the hand. I think they are capital for the purpose.

148. Have you any reason to think that ferrets will attack sheep or lambs?—It may be so; but we can easily get rid of them when it comes to that.

Sir NORMAN CAMPBELL, examined.

149. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you know anything about rabbits?—I have not had very much to do with rabbits, but I can tell you something about the destruction of them, with which I had a little to do.

150. Were they very numerous with you?—They were never very numerous with us, but knowing what has happened in other places made us a little afraid.

151. Where is it you speak of?—In the Cloudy Range country.

152. Then, you never had a very great number to get rid of?—We had quite enough to be afraid of consequences, if we did not find the way of getting rid of them should they come. We went in for poisoning, and ferrets and cats. We shall turn out this year about two hundred ferrets. We poisoned heavily two years ago; afterwards we poisoned again. Last winter we have been turning out cats and ferrets. We turned out twenty-five ferrets lately. I think we have got the rabbits pretty well under.

153. Do the ferrets increase when turned out?—Yes, they increase.

154. Have you ever been ordered to put on rabbiters or to trap?—We have never been interfered with. It is to that circumstance that I attribute our success. Had we been compelled to put on rabbiters the change would not have been for the better; we should have had more rabbits.

155. *Mr. Buchanan.*] As a matter of fact, there is no doubt whatever as to the efficacy of ferrets in your district?—Not the slightest. Mr. Bullen, I think, has proved that.

Mr. ALFRED DILLON BELL, examined.

156. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You have had much experience in working the Rabbit Act?—Yes; I have had a good deal.

157. Have you many in your district?—Yes.

158. What district is that?—I am interested in two districts; one is the Waihemo County, the other is the Vincent County.

159. The rabbits are numerous in those districts?—Yes.

160. Are they decreasing?—They are decreasing.

161. What steps are you taking to get rid of them?—Poisoning, in winter: snaring, trapping, dogging, and shooting, in summer. We made an attempt to introduce ferrets to follow on the poisoning; but, we were very much discouraged by the Inspectors, who insisted on our employing rabbiters with dogs and traps, causing loss of all the money spent on ferrets.

162. The ferrets were killed?—Yes; the ferrets were killed by the rabbiters, and their traps and dogs.

163. Do you think that poisoning and ferrets together will keep down or exterminate the

rabbits?—I do not think they will exterminate them, but they will settle any difficulty in ultimately getting rid of them. They will first diminish them, and then effectually keep them down.

164. Has the feed on your run been much affected by the rabbits?—They have been numerous enough, and are so still; but the effect is not so perceptible now as it was two years ago.

165. Can you estimate at all the difference it makes in regard to the number of sheep you can carry?—No; we have found a great difficulty in doing that. It is a very difficult question. We have tried in different ways. There had been a falling off in the quantity of wool and lambs, which we cannot attribute to any other cause, but we have not been able definitely to fix it upon the rabbits in approximate proportion. It is a very difficult thing indeed to estimate the reduction of stock in consequence of rabbits.

166. Did you say you were using wheat?—Wheat and oats.

167. Do you find oats as good?—Quite as good. We use oats exclusively on one station.

168. It has been stated that the rabbits took the wheat and left the oats?—In as many cases the experiments have turned out the other way. I have tried it carefully myself. I think I am perfectly justified in stating that there is no difference, provided both are mixed by the same man with the same precision.

169. Do you use rhodium?—No, we do not use rhodium: we use sugar, and sometimes salt.

170. How do you lay it?—Not in a heap; we lay it in scattered lots, no two grains on the top of each other, to diminish risk to stock.

171. Do you find they take it readily, both in summer and in winter?—No.

172. Will they take it in summer?—To a very slight extent; it is almost useless in summer.

173. What number of ferrets have you turned out?—About fifty, from first to last.

174. Have you any reason to suppose that they have increased?—I know they have bred, because the young ones have been found.

175. Can you say whether the ferrets have attacked any lambs or sheep?—No; I have no knowledge of anything of the kind.

176. Are you satisfied with the Act itself, or would you suggest any amendments in it?—I cannot help thinking myself that, considering the number and class of the men that become officials under this Act, the powers conferred by the Act are dangerous. I am very much interested in having a proper and strong inspection, that is, having the Inspector armed with every necessary power; but, considering the class of men that are put in possession of these powers, they are apt to be injudiciously and dangerously used. Still the Inspector must be armed with very strong powers.

177. Can you point to any particular portion of the Act which you would amend in the direction you speak of?—The section of the Act conferring the powers I speak of is the 10th section of the Act of 1882.

178. You object to that: on what grounds?—That the powers which are conferred under this section should only be conferred, if really conferred at all, on men of the greatest possible discretion and experience. They are powers unknown in other laws. A great number of appointments are made in this department. I know of seven men regularly coming to one of my stations alone, including the chief officer. These men are very ordinary people; most of them respectable enough, but I do not think they are qualified to hold such powers. They appear to be unfit to hold powers of this kind, which are unprecedented.

179. You find fault with the administration of the Act?—I am not speaking now of administration; I am speaking of the powers conferred by the Act itself, not of the manner in which they are used.

180. Would you limit those powers? I gather from what you have just said that you object to the persons appointed to carry out the Act. I understood that to be included under the head administration?—I do not want to be so understood in answering your present question. You asked me whether I would suggest any amendments in the Act. I suggested this amendment, and gave a reason for so doing.

181. In the amendment you suggest, would you desire that the clauses containing these powers should be struck out, or that the powers should be limited?—I would suggest, at any rate, that the words "in the opinion of the Inspector" should be struck out, in the first place.

182. Then you would leave it to the Resident Magistrate, or the Judge of the Court, whoever he might be, to decide whether the evidence were sufficient to prove the charge?—Yes; the pretence is that such is the case now, but it is not the case. It is otherwise. Why not allow the Inspector to fine without going to the Court at all? The theory of the Act is that the Inspector must take you to Court; but when he takes you to Court, though you are able to prove there that he has been mistaken, or even wilfully wrong, the Court must decide that you are guilty even if convinced that you have not transgressed the Act. The Court must act on the "opinion" which the Inspector gives in opening the case.

183. Surely the onus of proving that rabbits are not there is thrown upon the owner of the land?—So it should be.

184. Is not that the effect of this clause?—No; the effect of this clause is that it makes it impossible for any accused person not to be found guilty. It makes it impossible for him to prove himself innocent. The Inspector says simply, "It is my opinion." Unless you prove that that is not his opinion, you are found guilty. Of course, it is impossible to prove that. The Resident Magistrate explains that it is impossible for the defendant to prove his innocence. The Inspector need not bring any witnesses at all. He has only to say, "That is my opinion," and that constitutes the offence. I think also that the expression, "if there should be still rabbits upon the land," is unnecessarily comprehensive, for we all know that there are rabbits in every part of New Zealand, wherever they have been before.

185. What would you have in place of it?—It seems to me that the intention was that it should not mean where there were, say, a few or only half-a-dozen on the land. It means not only "where there are a considerable number," but also "where they have not been diminished to

such an extent as the owner might have done if he had taken all the precautions requisite for that purpose." Could not an expression be used to convey that meaning? Wherever there have been rabbits there they are now.

Hon. J. Williamson: The clause is vague; there is no doubt about that.

186. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Is there any other point to which you would refer?—I think the Act itself is on the whole a very good and at present a very necessary one.

187. Have you any other matter to which you would draw attention?—I think a very large number of persons are appointed under this Act. I also think that the great expense incurred in carrying out the Act is wholly unnecessary. I think it could be carried out with very great diminution of the number of appointments. I do not know whether you desire my views under this head, but you are asking my opinion, as I understand, generally.

188. I have no doubt your opinion is valuable. You say there were no less than seven Inspectors visiting one of your runs, including the head of the department?—Yes.

189. What is the size of the districts?—They are confined to portions of three counties.

190. Do you think the work they have to do is not so much as they might do—that there are too many Inspectors for the work?—Yes, there are too many inspectors by far.

191. Are they subordinate one to another, or are they all on the same footing under Mr. Bayly?—There are three principals, three subordinates, and one chief.

192. If I understand you rightly you think that the power which the Inspector has of ordering the owners of land to trap and kill with rabbiters is not desirable?—I should not like to make so sweeping a statement, to apply in every possible case. I suppose it is occasionally desirable. I think it might be laid down, at any rate, that when the Inspector finds that efforts are made to introduce the ferret, and that the attempt is honest and not merely a sham to put him off, he should insist that men should be prohibited following with traps and dogs. I think there exists sufficient temptation to interference with really efficient means, on the part of inferior Inspectors. I dare say the majority of the present men are superior to anything of the kind, but not all of them.

193. I understand you to say that where there are ferrets it is undesirable to use traps?—I spent £100 near my own homestead in making experiments with ferrets. I was ordered to place men and traps on the same piece of ground. The answer I got from one of the subordinates with whom I remonstrated was, "I don't believe in these ferrets myself." In order that I might try the matter I refused to comply with the notice to employ rabbiters on the ferret ground. I was summoned and fined for this piece of land. A man who is charged under this Act cannot prove himself innocent. He might be charged if there never was a rabbit on the land. That fact might be proved by witnesses. But while the witness was in the box answering the questions the Magistrate might ask the Inspector, "Is it your opinion" that rabbits are there? If the Inspector should answer "Yes," all the rest of the evidence simply goes in mitigation of fine. It cannot be less than £1. The Government employ counsel against you: then you have to pay costs of the department's counsel, a thing you have not to do even if you were charged with a really criminal offence.

194. *Hon. J. Williamson.*] With regard to the use of poisoned grain, do you suffer much loss among your stock?—We are persuaded there is some annual loss; but it is not of a serious character provided the poisoned grain is laid in a proper manner. But if it is in heaps the loss of life would be great.

195. You seem to think that it should not be in the choice of the Inspector to insist upon putting on traps and rabbiters where proper steps have been taken by the owner of the land to get rid of the rabbits. The Inspector might summon him to Court, but it might be proved by the owner that he had taken the proper steps. I suppose cases might arise when it would be necessary to have traps and rabbiters?—It is of no avail to prove that you have taken proper steps. You cannot escape conviction. That is the reason why I say that some alteration in the Act is advisable. I think that a person should have some chance—some facility in making his defence to a quasi-criminal charge. If he were accused of any other offence he would have such facility allowed. When a conviction is recorded under this Act it affects any subsequent charge. But you cannot escape a conviction being recorded. The consequence is a heavier penalty the next time you are charged, whether you are then to blame or not.

196. Do you think that ferrets alone would be able to keep the number of rabbits under?—My experience convinces me that poison in winter and ferrets subsequently would be sufficient.

197. Without the aid of trapping, dogs, or firearms?—I think that these might perhaps be called in aid where the rabbits were increasing in spite of the other means, if in special spots such increase should be found really to take place; but only as a special and otherwise objectionable expedient.

198. Has it come to your knowledge that dogs become wild?—Yes.

199. And destroy sheep?—Yes. Will you allow me to say, in reference to what has been said, that, either by law or strong recommendation made to the chief of the department, care should be taken that ignorant Inspectors should not insist, at lambing-time and for some time before and after, on dogs being worked, if dogs cannot really be prohibited altogether. We suffer severely from this dog-pest.

200. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] I would ask you whether the Government have offered to send you some weasels and stoats?—No.

201. You are aware that ninety weasels and stoats have been received by the Government from England?—Yes.

202. Do you know where they were turned out?—I heard they were turned out at Lake Wanaka.

203. Would you be glad to have had them?—I should have refused them under existing circumstances. I would under other circumstances have taken them. By "existing circumstances," I mean that the Inspector might probably have insisted upon them being killed as soon as turned out.

204. Do you find any difficulty in lambing time?—I cannot say that I definitely traced any

great loss of lambs to the rabbits themselves. I am unable to say. Great loss arises from being compelled to employ men and dogs at that time, however, and for long after.

205. Do you think that if the land were poisoned systematically in winter, there would be any necessity to do so in the summer?—I cannot say that with regard to every place.

206. Have you not found that by allowing them some period of rest they draw together, and are then more easily reduced?—Yes.

207. Do you not find that dogging and shooting them scatters them over again?—Yes, it does; and great harm is done in this way by the ignorance of Inspectors, who spoil the work by insisting on such localized colonies being scattered again over the country in the breeding season.

208. Will they take the poison readily in winter if they are scattered in summer?—No; it is a cardinal point to let them alone as much as possible before the poison is laid; and, here again the Inspectors often vexatiously spoil and ruin real work, which would otherwise be thoroughly effective.

209. *Mr. Walker.*] About what altitude is the place you speak of?—It is from 800 to 5,000 feet.

210. Are there rabbits all over the district?—More or less over all.

211. Do they use dogs over the rough country?—Yes; but there seems to be no regularity of system maintained by the Inspectors. I am speaking only of three or four Inspectors. Some of them have common sense enough when spoken to; but they cause us to do foolish things, destructive of any plan we may form to get rid of rabbits.

212. Part of the country is snowed-up in winter, is it not?—Yes; my experience is that the mountains are just as well let alone in the summer. Rabbits seem to congregate in special localities after the winter in order to breed, but not to scatter over the mountains unless harassed and dogged.

213. Do you know whether the winter is sufficient to kill rabbits?—Perhaps it is a help; I cannot say that I think so practically in my country.

214. Do they not emigrate from the country in masses?—My experience is, that after winter-poisoning on the mountains, it is a rare thing to come across rabbits at all, except in certain spots. These spots can, where necessary, be advantageously dealt with by ferrets. If they are dealt with by dogs and guns the result is stocking the mountains again. It is perfectly suicidal to do that, and the work itself is ruinous to the stock.

215. *Captain Russell.*] Is there any good to be effected by rabbit-proof fences?—I do not think so. There is an immense quantity of roads and reserves in Otago, and these must be left open. The rabbits are most severe on Government runs, which appear to be held under a very useless system of tenure—most of them for only two, three, or four years; and, under such circumstances, rabbit-proof fences are impossible.

216. Can they work much against fences when they are up?—You speak of rabbit-fences? We have no rabbit-proof fences, not to any extent. I have a few about my homesteads; they are perfectly effectual.

217. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I understood you to say that they would not take poison much in summer. We had a witness yesterday who thought that adding a little rhodium and sugar to make it sweet, would attract them?—I have tried both with but small success; that is not my opinion.

218. *Mr. Buchanan.*] May I ask the name of the Inspector who compelled the use of dogs and guns?—I will give you his name if you wish it; but I do not come here to make charges. I will answer the question if you wish.

219. My object is this: The administration of the Act is dependent to a large extent on the intelligence and character of the men employed. We have the reports of the Inspector before us: we have the opinions of the officers in his report. My object in asking the question is to compare the action of the particular officer referred to with the report he sends up?—The officer I am speaking of is, I expect, not mentioned in the report, because he is a subordinate, although his action has been sustained by his superior.

220. Is it possible that this officer may have acted under instructions from his superior?—There will be no advantage in giving the name of the officer here before yourselves; none that I can see. I do not wish to make a charge against any particular officer here. When I spoke of "Inspectors" I was simply referring to the tribe generally.

221. You do not wish to make any charge?—No, not here before the Committee. I have done so in the proper quarter.

222. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I gather from your evidence that the Act ought to be altered in respect to the mode of recovering penalties?—Yes, it ought, in my opinion, to be so changed that, in any Court case, the Magistrate and not the Inspector should be the judge, from the evidence, as to whether efficient means to get rid of rabbits had been taken or not. It should, like every other possible charge, be a matter of evidence whether the accused should be convicted or discharged. The way I put it was this: That the Inspector's opinion as to efficient means must be regarded by any Court as of great importance in relation to the facts. But what I was pointing out was that, no matter whether you have proved that you took efficient means, so long as there is the mere "opinion" of the Inspector before the Court, a conviction must follow, no matter what the evidence may be. That is a very great defect in the Act. I think it is a very great mistake of administration. It allows these men tremendous and absurd powers. It is not pretended even that, in the appointment of these men, such large powers are taken account of. Another material point is contained in answer to a question by the Hon. Captain Fraser. When once you are convicted, which there is no possibility of your avoiding, the conviction only increases the penalty next time. That is not a matter of discretion. Having been previously convicted the penalty must be increased.

223. Under the previous Act, were you aware of cases of this kind of evidence being given before the Magistrate where one, two, or more men were constantly employed, and, according to the

evidence, the results in diminishing the number of rabbits were allowed to be satisfactory? It was found in my district that evidence was given in repeated cases before the Court to the effect that such steps were taken as ought to have resulted in diminishing the number of rabbits, yet they seemed to be as numerous as ever. This evidence was not exactly in accordance with the fact. Those who could have proved it were mere dummies supposed to be interested in the extermination of the rabbit; but, as a matter of fact, they are not so employed. In condemning the present law, can you suggest a remedy by which such a state of things may be avoided for the future: by which it might be lawful to deal with a case according to actual results, and not regard so much actual means taken?—I do not think any suggestion I could make would meet the whole case you describe. If the progress of the work is not satisfactory, after a certain time has been allowed in the locality of work, the means would not be regarded as sufficient. Even where the results were satisfactory, the Magistrate might not hold them to be so.

224. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Are we to gather from your evidence that, in your opinion, the class of men employed as Inspectors are not such as they ought to be?—I have not said that. I said that a number of the men employed are not men who should be intrusted with the immense powers given by this Act. I have but a very slight knowledge of the Inspectors generally; but in our district, at all events, it would be out of all question to speak of them in terms of such sweeping condemnation. It would be quite as unreasonable as it would be to pretend that they are all the right kind of men.

225. *Mr. Dodson.*] Do you think that there are places where trapping, netting, and shooting would be required?—There may be a few places. I think that even during winter there may be a very few places where trapping might be carried on successfully.

226. Do you object to the Inspector saying that is necessary?—No, I do not say that I unconditionally object where no ferrets are supposed to be. I think they should have the power to order trapping where ferrets are absent, wherever the thing is shown to be necessary and unavoidable, provided that the person instructed to do so should be allowed to show that it is not necessary and is undesirable, or if it can be shown to be against his chances of diminishing the rabbits by his own efforts. Your question, you will remember, refers solely to trapping.

227. You perceive there is a conflict of authority here; you would leave in the hands of owners the right to say whether he would do so?—If there is an irreconcilable conflict of opinion between the owner and the Inspector it should be decided in the Resident Magistrate's Court—with a fair chance to both sides, of course; not with the present certainty that, right or wrong, the Inspector will win.

228. Are there places where the rabbits will not take poison?—I would not go the length of saying that there are such places; but, even if there are, I still think the right to say that rabbiters should be employed should be in the hands of some person with considerable discretion. To say that the Inspector who happens to be assigned to that locality should decide such a question where there is a conflict of authority would be more or less of a sham. He is much less likely to be right than the owner in such a case; and, if wrong, he would utterly spoil the work of systematic poisoning.

229. *Hon. Mr. Nurse.*] I understand you to say that you had been forced to do things which you objected to?—Yes.

230. And you say that being forced to do those things operated against your chance of getting rid of rabbits?—Yes.

231. And you were prosecuted for not doing the things you objected to?—I was; but I had the determination to see how things were best done, and act upon my own experience and that of others.

232. You had more interest in having the country clear of rabbits than the Inspector?—That I could not say. I suppose you might judge of how that stands.

233. You would leave the landowner to have the fullest liberty as to the means he would consider best to get rid of the pest?—He should have the liberty to use the means he thought best, provided they are not *prima facie* absurdly inadequate, for a certain fair time.

234. And the Inspector to judge of results?—After a certain time.

235. What would be your opinion of a state of things which would put the self-interest of one against the other?—I do not believe in the landowner's self-interest in such cases. It cuts both ways. Self-interest for the owner may mean to him that he should keep his money in his pocket. A fine is nothing compared with what has to be expended on rabbits. I do not think self-interest is sufficiently strong. If it were the Rabbit Act would not be required at all. There are plenty of people who do not think the matter of any importance. They think the whole difficulty is raised by squatters and other objectionable people for the purpose of getting State aid. To such people self-interest would appear to mean no steps at all.

236. Are there any unoccupied lands in your neighbourhood?—Yes, there is a certain quantity of unoccupied land; but the question has not been raised by me with regard to these lands. So far as they are within my own lines, I clear them myself. The Government reserves outside my own boundaries there have been properly attended to, I think, on the whole.

237. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you small owners that do not comply with the instruction of Inspectors?—As a general rule in my own district I think they cannot afford to bear the same amount of worrying that I am supposed to be able to bear. Small owners, especially those who are agriculturalists, are protected in summer by the fact that their lands are covered with growing grain. It is difficult for them then to attend to the killing of rabbits. It is also an unpopular thing to enforce the Act in the case of small owners, and this affects some of the Inspectors. Except in winter, it is impossible for them to afford to take such steps as have been enforced upon myself, for instance. In winter, I think, poison and the work of the ferrets will be found sufficient on all properties, large and small.

238. Have you any other observations to make as regards the working of the Act?—I think

not. I have personal objections in respect of some of the officers and of the management of the department, but I do not think this is the proper place to bring these forward. I think I have told you all which, in my opinion, is desirable in the way of changing the Act. I have had occasion to complain of two or three of the Inspectors, but that does not touch the question you are examining me upon. I may, however, just mention to the Committee that I have had an inquiry held in one case. I do not know the result; but three days ago I had a letter from the Colonial Secretary, informing me that there was a Committee sitting upon the Rabbit and Sheep Act, and that I might submit complaints to that Parliamentary Committee. But I do not intend to lay a departmental complaint before this Committee. I do not think it is the place for anything of the kind at all.

239. *Mr. Walker.*] I was about to ask whether Mr. Bell thinks that any good would arise if the local bodies had more direct control over Inspectors in different districts?—It did not work before when the Rabbit Trustees were elected. The question was then regarded as affecting large landholders alone. Now, however, the rabbit is known to affect everybody who holds land, and I think the local bodies might exercise duties in the matter with advantage, but I cannot say I have really thought the matter out.

240. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Where there is a difference between the landowner and the Inspector, do you think that the local body might be the proper judge?—No; I cannot say that I have formed a definite opinion on the subject of giving local bodies inspecting powers. I am beginning to think that the local bodies can be used specially to cheapen the enormous expenditure in connection with carrying out the Act. The number of men engaged as officials is too large as compared with that which might do the work.

241. Do you not think that if the local bodies had anything to do with it, we might give up the hope of a uniform system upon which to work the Act?—I am not prepared to positively advocate the system of local bodies having special powers; but I have really not yet formed a definite opinion. The local bodies represent a class interested in the extermination of the pest, and would, perhaps, be able to judge of the efficiency of means to be adopted.

242. *Mr. Dodson.*] You mean County Councils and Road Boards?—County Councils, where they exist.

243. *Captain Russell.*] Does Mr. Bell feel that it is necessary there should be ample powers in the hands of the Inspector?—Very strong powers.

244. Absolute?—No, I do not think absolute.

245. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You do not suppose it to be necessary to appoint men with such plenary power?—I do not think there are many men in New Zealand fit to be entrusted with such powers as the present men are given.

WEDNESDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. P. R. McRAE, examined.

246. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you had much experience of rabbits?—Yes.

247. Would you put on rabbiters and dogs to get rid of them?—If you want to breed rabbits keep rabbiters.

248. Then you would rely on the natural enemies of the rabbits, ferrets and cats: have you turned out ferrets?—Yes; I have turned out 1,300.

249. Do you think they increase in their wild state?—Yes; we have seen them with litters of from five to ten.

250. Have they killed a great many?—There is no doubt they have killed a good many rabbits. There is certainly something that works severely on the rabbits. We do not now see so many young ones. It will take a year or two for the result of ferrets being employed to be fully ascertained. That they destroy a great many rabbits is without doubt. If rabbiters are kept off the country, and the work of exterminating the rabbit is carried on with poison first and afterwards turning out ferrets, we shall not be further troubled with rabbits.

251. Have the Inspectors asked you to put on rabbiters?—Yes; but I have simply refused.

252. Did they take any steps against you?—No; they said, in one instance, "Oh, what is the use of turning out ferrets?"

253. They did not insist on it?—No; they did not insist on it.

254. How long is it since you first turned out ferrets?—Two years.

255. You have a very large number: do they breed fast?—Yes, they breed fast. I have a hundred breeding ones; they average seven in a litter, and they have generally two litters in a season.

256. What kind is yours: the white ferret or the pole-cat?—White; I have five of the others.

257. I think the pole-cat is the hardiest ferret, is he not, and the most fierce?—I could not say; we sometimes get very good ferrets which are white ones.

258. What poison have you been using?—We use oats; the rabbits seem to take oats better.

259. Do you use rhodium?—No; nothing but phosphorus. I used sugar and rhodium at first, but it was an extra expense.

260. Do you find them take it in summer?—Yes; the only thing is that in summer it sets fire to the grass; the heat of the sun sets it on fire.

261. You must make it very strong?—We use 1½ lb. to the 100 lb. of oats.

262. How do you prepare it?—We have a phosphorizer something like a cullender; you put your water in hot. When the grain absorbs all the water, put in your phosphorus; the steam dissolves the phosphorus. We use arsenic when we cannot use phosphorus.

263. Have you heard of ferrets that have been killed by the arsenic?—I have lost some dogs that have been poisoned through eating the entrails of rabbits.

264. Do you know whether the ferrets attack sheep or lambs?—I do not think so. The

manager told me that, while ferrets killed rabbits in large numbers, he never saw a ferret touch a lamb.

265. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You say that the rabbits would increase if you employed rabbiters and dogs?—Yes.

266. How do you reconcile that with this fact that in 1875 I started rabbiters, with dogs, to clear some 12,000 acres of country: the rabbiters and rabbits had a fair start. I have never used poison: I have never used ferrets, except a ferret on the man's back: I trapped only for a little while in winter, and that only in particular places. In the same range of country rabbits are so thick that I have never seen anything to beat it. Now, any one might ride over these 12,000 acres a whole day and not notice one?—I cannot understand it, except that your rabbitier must have been a very careful and conscientious man not to destroy their enemies. But, it makes a wonderful difference if you send out ten or twelve men. You had to do with one man only. You must have had a most trustworthy man. But, in employing rabbiters you often have to deal with persons whom you do not know, what they are, or who they are. I have five men employed as rabbiters. I agree with you that the men should be good men. I am simply stating the history of the past nine years with me. All I can say is, that you have been most fortunate.

267. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you any other remark to make as to the working of this Act?—No; the only way that I know of getting rid of rabbits is by poison and ferrets—the poison first, the ferret after.

268. Do the rabbit Inspectors do their duty?—Yes, as far as I know.

269. *Mr. Dodson.*] Do you think that the Rabbit and Sheep Acts, if properly worked at the same time, would operate in cleaning the country?—Yes, if the Acts were properly worked, especially the Sheep Act. I have never found it oppressive; it is expensive, not oppressive.

270. What amount of money might you have expended under the Sheep Act?—My fencing alone has cost me £14,000.

THURSDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. R. S. HAWKINS, examined.

271. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I think you have said that the Rabbit Act has not been carried out with sufficient energy in your district?—I think it is better now. Public opinion has helped a good deal. It has come to be more in favour of the working of the Rabbit Act. They begin to comprehend that the rabbit nuisance is a real evil, and that the successful coping with it is proved to be a public advantage. There was a good deal of jealousy of it at first.

272. Do you think that the Inspectors are the fit men to carry it out?—I cannot give a general opinion on this.

273. The Committee wish to find out how the department is really working: perhaps you are satisfied with the working of the department?—No; I would not say that I am. It is a very delicate thing for me to say whether an individual officer is fit or unfit for his duties. But I think the Government ought to exercise great care and discrimination in their appointments. Inspectors under the Rabbit Act should be men of good character, thoroughly reliable, capable, and trustworthy men, and free from all suspicion of improper influence.

274. Can you tell us whether the Inspectors in your district require the landholders to put on rabbiters with dogs and trapping?—Yes, they have required it up to a certain point. When I had first to deal with my run it was swarming with rabbits. It was one of the rabbit-nests of the whole country. During the first year I was not alive to the full extent of the evil. Next year Mr. Wallace Smith, a most capable officer, was appointed. He came to me, and said that he had come to the conclusion that my place was heavily infested with rabbits; that I must take measures to get rid of the rabbits. I said to him, "What do you want me to do?" He said, "I want you to lay ten tons of poisoned grain." I felt very much annoyed; but it was no use to be annoyed. I went thoroughly into the matter with him, and took his advice; it ended in my laying down seven tons of grain by two gangs of poisoners. In a short time there was not a rabbit to be seen. He said, after that, "You must keep on rabbiters." I did so; but I found then that all I had before done was without avail. The rabbits were coming on from neighbouring lands, and in two months the pest on one paddock was as bad as if I had never killed a rabbit.

275. You attributed to your neighbour that the rabbits came from his land: was not the Act enforced?—It was never enforced in one case. In another case a complaint was made to the Inspector. He did not answer my letter. I told him I should send the correspondence to the Government. I fenced according to agreement with neighbours. I have put up, partly with their help, partly alone, twelve miles of rabbit-proof fencing. I then engaged trappers from the South Island. I set to work by means of traps and dogs. Meantime, I bought, bred, and turned out ferrets. Then I found that the trappers were trapping the ferrets. I went to Kaikoura to see Mr. Bullen. When I came back from there I was perfectly satisfied with what I had seen in Kaikoura, and I paid off all the rabbiters. I am now breeding and turning out ferrets. I have turned out about one hundred in the last six weeks. I am satisfied with the work that the ferrets are doing now. I think they will keep down the rabbits.

276. Do the ferrets increase?—They increase rapidly in Wairarapa. I feel that they have got through a very extensive tract of country. The whole of the country from Te Ore Ore and the Wangaeahu, which is about two to three miles from Masterton, to my place, used to be swarming with rabbits. Any number of rabbiters could not have reduced the rabbits to the extent they are now reduced. About a year ago I remember a place near the Wangaeahu Bridge where, within ten chains of road, I have counted in the evening up to fifty rabbits running across. The other night, in going home late in the evening, and passing the same place, there was not a single rabbit to be seen. The last time I was up there I overtook a settler who told me that some traps had been put against rabbit holes under a paling fence, and three ferrets were caught the first night. I was riding, a short time ago, through a rough country; I think quite twenty miles from where any

ferrets had been turned out, and passed through some cold low wet bush. As I was going along the bridle-track two white ferrets passed it. I am perfectly convinced that it must be the ferrets that are keeping down the rabbits, for I cannot conceive anything else that could do it. I know that men with dogs never could do it. I firmly believe that ferrets are doing work that is wanted to be done, and protection for the ferret is necessary. There should be discretionary power given to the Inspectors to require pastoral landowners to turn out ferrets as the means of exterminating rabbits. One of the difficulties of the ferret question—of course, what I say applies to stoats and weasels—lies in this: Suppose I have 5,000 acres, and on this land I turn out ferrets; suppose my neighbour did not choose to turn out ferrets, but preferred to keep trappers. In such circumstances I might go on turning out ferrets for any period, and they would soon be all killed. That would be a positive evil. The negative evil would be that you might get ferrets to stock 5,000 acres, but could not get ferrets to stock 100,000 acres, and it would be almost hopeless to stock your 5,000 acres, if the owners of the 95,000 acres would do nothing.

277. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do you think then that this Committee, in reporting upon this section, should recommend to the effect indicated in your evidence: is it your opinion that the clause in the Act, which deals with the "natural enemies," should be made use of for the protection of ferrets; in other words, that instructions should be given to Inspectors that as far as possible methods of killing, which at the same time destroy rabbits, should be stopped?—I think there should be a discretionary power in the Inspector. As to whether all other methods of killing rabbits should be stopped, I am not prepared to say. Outside the natural enemy, you can have one remedy, that is poison. You can always poison. It would be hard to say whether there should be any prohibition of trapping and rabbiting. I think it should be matter for the Inspector in his judgment to say—if the natural enemies were taking possession and trapping at the same time was going on—the trapping should be stopped.

278. An Inspector in the South Island, in a district where ferrets are numerous, says in his report that he has no opinion of the ferrets: do you think that an Inspector holding such opinions holding his office would be detrimental to the eradication of rabbits?—I do not think it was a wise thing to say upon the part of the Inspector. But his position may have been this: that he did not find the ferrets in sufficient number in his district to overtake the rabbits; consequently he would find that the ferret was making no perceptible difference in the number of rabbits. He would then probably come to the conclusion that ferrets were of no use. The question of retaining men or not would depend on many considerations. It is very difficult to say whether continuing such an Inspector in his employment would be proper or not. Suppose the case of a man in my own employment who had charge of ferrets. If he expressed such an opinion, I should consider whether he did the best he could in the performance of his proper duty. If I thought he was unfavourable to ferrets, and wanted to do away with them, I would dismiss him. If he was honestly and capably doing his work in breeding and taking care of the ferrets, I would take no notice of his opinions.

279. Are you of opinion that the local management would be more effective than it is at present?—When you ask me about local government and management, I answer that there is no local government worth a rush to deal with anything. As long as that is the case I would prefer to see the matter dealt with by the General Government. Take one item alone in which the value of the ferret is apparent. The pastoral owners have been put to vast expense in purchasing wire-netting to prevent the spread of this nuisance. I believe we shall be able to avoid this expense in the future. There will be no necessity for wire-netting, and this is the more important, because wire-netting is perishable. But over and above all this, the spread and protection of the "natural enemy" is of immense importance to the biggest landholder of all—I mean the people of the colony; for the Crown lands of the colony, especially in the South, are in many cases valueless from rabbits. I attach immense importance to it. I certainly think that, unless some conclusive and absolute reasons can be shown against the "natural enemy" of the rabbit, the Government of the country is bound to give the "natural enemy" the strongest protection and support.

FRIDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. FOSTER, Sheep Inspector, examined.

280. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I would like to ask you if you can give us any information about rabbits?—I have had some little experience at Kaikoura, and I reported upon South Canterbury to the Government some two years ago.

281. Acting upon your knowledge gained by that experience, what do you consider the best way of dealing with the rabbit nuisance?—At Kaikoura, where the plan was commenced by Mr. Bullen, we have had great success with ferrets and poisoned grain. We have completely got them under at Kaikoura.

282. Do you use wheat or oats?—We use wheat for silver-grey rabbits. There are silver-grey rabbits at Kaikoura. They seem to take the wheat better than oats; but farther north, where there is the common brown rabbit, I am told they seem to prefer the oats. There is no doubt that the ferrets have been of very great assistance at Kaikoura.

283. Do you think that poisoning and ferrets are sufficient to keep the rabbits down or diminish them?—It appears to me that it depends a great deal upon the breed of the rabbits. In South Canterbury and North Otago there are rabbits of a large kind, that appear to breed chiefly on the surface. They do not burrow very much except in very soft or sandy places. The Kaikoura rabbit—the silver grey—will burrow through anything, and there the ferrets appear to get shelter in the burrows. The second generation of ferrets that are bred in this country will, I suppose, get hardier, and in time may be able to live on the surface, the same as the rabbits.

284. You do not think the ferrets would live unless there were rabbit-holes?—I think not. The ferret is not a strong animal at all, and it is absolutely necessary that he should be kept dry and sheltered. No doubt they will become hardier in time.

285. We have had evidence to show that the ferrets undoubtedly do increase in their wild state in New Zealand?—Yes; Kaikoura breeds splendid ferrets.

286. In some cases we hear that the Inspector requires rabbiters with dogs to be put on to kill down the rabbits, and that a number of ferrets have been killed in consequence: what is your view about that?—From what little experience I have had, I should object to rabbiters altogether. I think that the natural enemies and poisoning are the two chief means to be employed.

287. Do you think that there are any cases where rabbiters and dogs might perhaps be best?—There might be such cases, but I should think it would be a very great evil if they were killing the natural enemies at the same time. I think that the cat, too, is a most valuable animal to turn out.

288. *Mr. Walker.*] You referred to South Canterbury: have you had much experience of that rabbit country?—I was asked to report on South Canterbury, and I went over the whole of it between the Rangitata and the Waitaki.

289. Are they an appreciable nuisance in that country?—Most decidedly; they were becoming rapidly worse every year.

290. They were spreading?—Yes.

291. That means that no steps have been taken under the Act?—Yes; but there have been since. I believe they are being kept down now.

292. *Hon. the Chairman.*] When was it that you went there?—It was two years ago last June that I reported to the Government.

293. *Mr. Walker.*] Do you believe matters are improved since then?—I am told so, but I have not been in South Canterbury myself. At different stations they were killing from two to eight thousand and ten thousand rabbits in the year, chiefly by rabbiters. The rabbits there appear to breed like hares. The rabbits breed under the tussocks; you see very few holes there. It is high country, and you see them on the tops of the hills everywhere. They follow the snow up.

294. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] I was struck with your remark that the rabbits were much more like hares than rabbits. Have you noticed a difference between these rabbits and the rabbits coming up from Southland into Otago?—No; I have not been there.

295. You have heard that there is another kind of rabbit there?—Yes; the rabbiters in North Otago told me that the rabbits killed there were very different from the Southland rabbit—the latter being a smaller rabbit, with short ears. I take it that we have three breeds of rabbits in New Zealand, from what I have heard: the Southland rabbit, the tame rabbit, which has become partially wild, and the silver-grey rabbit.

296. Are you aware that what is called the English wild rabbit was introduced as such into New Zealand?—I have always heard that Dr. Menzies introduced them into Southland.

297. When you were between the Waitaki and Rangitata, did you go up as far as Awariri River?—I think not.

298. Did you go over to Benmore?—I went up to Mr. Sutton's station.

299. Did you hear of any ferrets doing good service there?—I do not recollect. When I was there was over two years ago.

300. *Mr. Buchanan.*] There is one question I would like to ask. Speaking of the administration of the Sheep and Rabbit Acts, are you of opinion that a better result would be gained by local administration than by administration as at present arranged?—Well, I imagine it would have to be something of the same kind that we have now. You mean by local administration, I suppose, that the counties should undertake the work.

301. Yes, or trustees?—You see you have inland counties that have no ports, and it will be one of the chief duties of the Stock Department to protect New Zealand from outside diseases, not only scab, but foot-and-mouth disease, and pleuro-pneumonia perhaps. I fancy that could hardly be done by individual counties.

302. So that, in your opinion, the administration should be of such a character as would keep the colony as far as possible within one management?—I think so. I think if you got it in the hands of the counties you would have as many ways of reading the Acts and administering them as there are counties probably.

TUESDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. SUTTON, examined.

303. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Were you working under the Rabbit Act as well as the Sheep Act?—Yes.

304. Have you anything to suggest with regard to the Rabbit Act?—No.

305. *Mr. Dodson.*] You have not had much experience under that Act?—Not in Marlborough; No.

Captain RAYMOND, examined.

306. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I believe you are willing to give information to the Committee regarding the destruction of rabbits and the treatment to be adopted for getting rid of them?—Yes; I shall be happy to do so. I have had a very long experience in dealing with the pest in Southland; and, after a desperate fight with them, succeeded in bringing them under as regards number. At the finish I originated the oat-phosphorous poison, but too late to save my own property. I was sold up a few months afterwards and went out almost penniless. Since then I have devoted my time and scanty means in sending directions and answering correspondence from all parts of the colony. I have done all I could to disseminate the knowledge of my discovery.

307. What do you consider the best mode of getting rid of the rabbits?—The use of poison.

308. What poison?—Phosphorized oats. I would use, in addition, a few dogs. I would not allow rabbiters to use dogs, but owners of property might have a few good dogs, which they could put in charge of a trustworthy man. After the country was well poisoned off, these dogs might be used in driving the rabbits into the inaccessible grounds where the dogs could not catch them, but the poison would reach them. By these means I believe the rabbits could be kept down to the minimum number.

309. Have you any experience of ferrets?—Yes; I joined with the Hon. Mr. Holmes and about half a dozen others, and brought out 200 ferrets. These were turned out on Castlerock and on my run, and on the runs adjoining.

310. Are you satisfied with the result?—The ferrets made no sensible impression on the rabbits, which were then swarming. All our efforts appeared to fail in keeping the pest in check. In point of fact, the rabbits took possession of the country. Ferrets, dogs, trapping, shooting, and fumigating were all used simultaneously, but failed to keep the rabbits in check.

311. Did you ever try bi-sulphide of carbon?—You can only use that successfully in short burrows. In very large ones it is not so effective, and in the big network warrens, such as are to be found in many places, it is almost useless. I used it for six months. The country in which rabbits burrow is the best country for ferrets to succeed in, because they will get hold of the young ones. The burrows afford good shelter for the ferret.

312. Would bi-sulphide of carbon be likely to kill the ferret?—It would undoubtedly, if it penetrated sufficiently into the burrows to reach them.

313. Then, you are not in favour of rabbiters with dogs?—No, I am not; they hurried my ruin; dog-rabbiting is fatal to sheep-farming. I only advocated the use of a few dogs owned by the owners of stations, and not by rabbiters, whose dogs continually harass and destroy the sheep.

314. Have large packs of dogs left their owners, and gone wild?—I have heard so.

315. Then the phosphorus, and the ferret, and dogs owned by owners of the land are the best means of getting rid of rabbits, and keeping their number under?—Yes; such is my experience. I have packed as many as eighty-five thousand skins in one year, principally dog-caught, before I originated the oat-poisoning process. Yet with all that dogging, and other means of rabbiting, they increased to such an extent as to take almost complete possession of the run.

316. Then, you recommend poisoning?—Yes; and after that a few dogs, and the natural enemy.

317. Are there any remarks that you would like to make as to the working of the Act?—I think this present plan is the nucleus of a good system, but I do not think it is carried out to the extent it might be. It appears to me that the head of the department has too many multifarious duties to attend to to give the necessary supervision. There are district Inspectors who may be very good men; but where there are a number of Inspectors picked up from different classes a lot of them will know nothing about their work, and a good many may not care whether they do their duty or not. They should possess a thorough knowledge of the business they have to go about. You will in most cases be able to judge by results. If I went over a division of country where an Inspector had charge, I should know, by the state of rabbits thereon, whether the Inspector was doing his duty or not. If rabbits are kept down to a minimum, or greatly reduced in numbers throughout, it would show that the man in charge was doing his duty, and was worth his salary; if not, he is worth nothing. What is wanted is a travelling Inspector, to see that these men do their duty: there may be only twenty good men to thirty bad ones.

318. There is Mr. Bayly?—He is the head of the department. It is impossible that he could give the supervision necessary; he has to trust to the district Inspectors. If they are good men it is all right. The same with the Inspector of subdivisions. But it appears to me that the whole thing wants supervising.

319. *Hon. Mr. Nurse.*] Is it your opinion that the Act should be altered so as to restrict the powers of the Inspectors; they appear now to have absolute power to force you to do things which you do not want to do. I would ask an answer, Yes or No?—From my knowledge of the Act they want all the power they have. If they act arbitrarily you can very easily bring them to book. You must not restrict their powers or you will make them nonentities.

320. *Mr. Lance.*] Might I ask in what year you began poisoning?—It was in November, 1879. I commenced with an American recipe. It cost me £2 8s. 6d. when rhodium was at 16s. an ounce, and phosphorus at 20s. per lb. We laid it outside of grass paddocks, where the rabbits were numerous. They did not touch it. It occurred to me, however, that wheat-porridge mixture was not a natural-looking bait for rabbits, and I substituted oats for crushed wheat. The next thing was to dispense with rhodium: that article was expensive. I found that the rabbits took the poisoned oats readily: then destruction was wholesale. It has proved most efficacious throughout the whole colony. It has been stated that the poisoned oats would not be eaten where there is green feed, but they will and do eat it where there is green feed. Rabbits were breeding in thousands on the Crown lands, and were not treated at all. There was a communication sent to the late Colonial Secretary by the Southland members urging my appointment for dealing with rabbits on the Crown lands. The reply intimated that the Government were not prepared to employ my services in that direction.

Hon. the Chairman: We have considered whether we could entertain your petition, but we find it is not within the province of this Committee to do so.

WEDNESDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. T. MACKAY, examined.

321. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you anything to say about the rabbit-pest?—I should like to make a few remarks as to the Rabbit Act. I should like to see a slight alteration in the Act; that

is, with regard to the poisoning being made simultaneous. I think it is patent to most people that poisoning is the most effectual remedy at present, until we see what the ferrets are going to do. I find, in my own case, that my neighbours are not poisoning simultaneously. I think we should all go together. Unless by simultaneous poisoning, there is not much good done. I may poison, and my neighbours may poison at different times, but the rabbits come back again. Then, as regards men and dogs, I think that is a most undesirable way of destroying them.

322. With regard to the Inspectors, have you anything to say as to the manner in which they administer the Act?—I think the Inspectors should discountenance the use of dogs. Both Mr. Andrews and myself, after very careful consideration of the matter, have determined that we would hunt rabbits no more with men and dogs. We find that rabbits, instead of being spread over the run, have gone into colonies. They have picked their own ground. If we use men and dogs we should disturb them, and help to distribute them over the land; so that we should have to poison not only every hill but every gully. If the ferrets are going to be of any use we must not go hunting with dogs. Those men who make it their business to hunt rabbits with dogs will destroy everything in the form of the natural enemy. It is their livelihood. In the face of such an evil as this rabbit-pest, the Government ought to bring in some regulations as they are found necessary.

323. You say that the rabbits have gone into colonies, and picked their own ground: do you observe that they choose a particular kind of soil?—I find that they avoid wet and cold clay land. They affect a light sandy soil. A great portion of the Wairarapa District is clay.

324. Have you any experience of the ferrets that have been turned out: do you think that they are likely to breed?—I am satisfied of it. But they would be killed in the end by men and dogs. That is the reason I should like to see hunting with men and dogs put a stop to.

325. What has been the result of the poisoning in your district?—It has been very good. The rabbits are at a very low ebb, but unless some efforts are made in the way of using ferrets they will increase again.

326. It is stated that you cannot poison rabbits where there is good feed for them?—I find that upon turning over a sod they will take it.

327. Do you not think that it is dangerous to sheep?—I do not think so if it is properly laid.

328. What course do you adopt?—We put poison very thick on some paddocks. I am inclined to think that if the poison is covered with a little earth, so as to allow the rabbits to scratch it up, that will be the best plan. Rabbits are always attracted by newly-turned earth. In New South Wales they make small square yards; they put down 4lb. or 5lb. of poison in a yard about a panel square.

329. What do you use?—Rhodium, and sometimes aniseed, which we think is better.

THURSDAY, 25TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. H. JACKSON, examined.

330. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are living in Wairarapa?—Yes.

331. Are you desirous to give evidence about rabbits and sheep?—I know very little about scab in sheep; at least I never have been scabby.

332. You come rather to give evidence about rabbits?—Yes.

333. Will you state to the Committee your views as to the working of the Rabbit Act: is it satisfactory or otherwise?—I consider that the Rabbit Act is as good as we can have it, with the exception of a few sections, which are too stringent—not for me, but for others. I can sympathize with those who have large runs. It appears to me that monthly notices are too close: it ought to be two months. I refer to section 8, where the first notice is given, and to section 9, where the first penalty is to be recovered. I think there the penalty is not sufficient. After a month's notice is given, and nothing is done, I think the fine ought to be £5. In section 8 notice is to be given first; the penalties are £1 or £20: I think it ought to be £5 or £10. Under section 10 two months' notice should be given instead of one. Where rabbits are numerous one month is of no use at all. I should like the Committee to understand that I have very few rabbits now; but seven years ago I was swarming with them: I killed them off before there was any Act in force.

334. How did you kill them?—With dogs: no poison.

335. Do you not think that you hunted them about into the other parts of the country?—I drove them on to my neighbours; I drove them back. If my neighbours killed as well, the rabbits would have been soon killed altogether. If this Act had been in force it would have saved them a great deal. The rabbits got so numerous that it was a question with many whether they would leave the rabbits and go themselves. I thought better of it: that I should live and the rabbits must go. I therefore set to work myself. It took me six months to get them down.

336. Did you use poison at all?—No; nothing but dogs and the gun. Poison was not then known for rabbits. I do not think it was even thought of. If my neighbours had been compelled to do the same as I was doing, it would have been a good job. The ground was poor, and would not keep rabbits. I had a good deal of artificial grass, so that they came on to me. I resolved to get rid of them, and I succeeded in doing it. That is the reason that I am so strong against their destruction by the natural enemies. I consider that every man, if he takes it in time, can destroy the rabbits and get rid of the nuisance.

337. But do you not recognize that that time is passed: that in many places they are too numerous to make any attempt to get rid of them with dogs and the gun?—Then, it is not the natural enemies that will do it. You must kill them yourself with dogs or by other means; not by the natural enemies.

338. What is the reason you object to the natural enemies?—Rabbits are breeding and ferrets are breeding.

339. Would you poison?—Poison is the thing. I would poison, and then I would have nothing but dogs.

340. You are strongly against the natural enemies?—I am ; I think that section ought to be struck out.

341. Will you repeat your reason more precisely?—I am put to a great deal of trouble by them. What is the use of all that your Acclimatization Societies are doing in introducing birds to destroy insects, if you introduce other animals to kill them? I have myself partridges, and keep a good many turkeys to kill grasshoppers and caterpillars. It is not only that they destroy insects, they are a decided benefit to the farm. It is, I have no doubt, the same with other people as it is with me. I have three or four hundred turkeys on my place. The grasshoppers and caterpillars used to destroy everything green. Since I have had turkeys, partridges, and pheasants, I kept that plague under. If you bring ferrets, stoats, and weasels to destroy the insectivorous birds, we shall again have a plague of caterpillars and grasshoppers. We know what these have done and are capable of doing. We have them still in some parts of New Zealand and Australia.

342. *Mr. J. McKenzie.*] I understand you to say that you object to ferrets and other natural enemies on account of their destruction of game?—Yes ; partridges, turkeys, and poultry.

343. You say that if you had to clear your run you would use poison?—I would use poison, and then dogs.

344. Does it occur to you that poison does also destroy game?—It does to a certain extent, but you would take care where you laid it.

345. You would not lay it where game were?—No ; you would only poison where the rabbits were. If you have to turn to ferrets, you will have some four or five years to breed them before they can do any work.

346. May I ask you what extent of country you cleared of rabbits?—About two thousand acres.

347. That was the area which you said was very bad in consequence of rabbits being on it?—When I saw I was to be infested with them I commenced at once. I have sons, and we set to work.

348. What is the nature of the country?—It is part flat, part hill, fern and bush, and there was a good deal of clearance. The rabbits were worse on the clearance. On new artificial grasses they were very severe. We found no trouble in destroying them. We continued to destroy them while the dogs could go to work. We used to work two packs a day. We reduced them down until we could only get two rabbits in the day. We have six dogs, and we may now catch one or two rabbits a week ; that is all. Formerly they were all over the place. Where they are not very numerous you can get rid of them with dogs without poison ; where they are too thick it requires poison.

349. Is it your opinion that the most they would be able to destroy is based on your particular experience of your own land, or have you in view the properties of other people, large and small?—Yes ; I know Wairarapa well. I have been in the north of New Zealand for forty-five years.

350. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do not rabbits breed faster on some kinds of soil?—Yes ; they breed better in sandy loam than where the ground is wet.

351. Suppose that, instead of two thousand acres, you owned one hundred thousand acres of bush, flat, and hill country, would you still be of the same opinion, that the natural enemies should be excluded from their share in the destruction of the rabbit?—Yes ; but it is not only that. As one of the small farmers in the Wairarapa, I was one of a committee to establish the introduction of insectivorous birds. With this object I bred a large number of turkeys to destroy the caterpillars and other insects. I think it is class-legislation to enable a large owner to turn out weasels and ferrets to destroy a neighbour's property. You have no right to destroy his poultry ; you have no right to destroy one industry for the sake of another. I am like most of the settlers round about.

352. You were talking about ferrets injuring the small farmers?—Yes ; Mr. Walker turned out some, and they are constantly going into people's places and destroying their poultry.

353. What is your object in suggesting the amendment of the 9th section to the effect that the penalty should be increased?—It is because people do not take notice until the penalty gets a little too heavy. After a penalty of £20 or £5 people would bestir themselves.

354. Do you think that the Act is too stringent?—No ; I do not think it is stringent enough ; only the time given should be two months instead of one month. I would make the penalty £5 instead of £1.

355. Do you think the powers of the Inspector are not too arbitrary?—I do not know. If an Inspector must have interpreters he will be of no use. I do not like things permissive. I like everything straightforward, and that every one should be made to do his duty.

356. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do rats kill rabbits?—I dare say they will kill anything they are able to attack.

357. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] I have heard of rabbits being killed by rats : at least there was nothing else to do it?—Rats will kill anything ; they will kill the rabbit in the hole.

358. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do ferrets increase much?—They have got all about among the settlers. I do not know how.

359. Are there a good many?—I have killed four or five in my own place.

360. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Would you have the Act administered locally or as at present?—As at present.

Mr. J. MARTIN, Junior, examined.

361. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are living in Wairarapa?—Yes.

362. You wish to give some evidence about rabbits?—Yes.

363. Are there a great many on your run?—No.

364. Has there been a great number?—There has been.

365. You killed them all?—Yes,

366. Will you state to the Committee what course you adopted?—I used poisoned grain. I kept them down afterwards with dogs. I used other means also; sometimes I employed ferrets, sometimes cats.

367. What do you think the best method to adopt?—Where they are numerous I think the poisoned grain should be used, leaving the rest to the natural enemies.

368. Are you an advocate for rabbiters?—I have rabbiters; but I am rather against them on the whole. I would not advise any one, if he could possibly do without them, to have rabbiters.

369. But you think they are necessary in some cases?—In some cases.

370. Can you state to the Committee your opinion as to whether the Rabbit Act has worked satisfactorily in your district?—I think on the whole it is satisfactory.

371. Do the Inspectors do their duty under it?—It would be better if the Inspectors would look around a little more than they have done, and keep watch in particular places.

372. The Inspectors make periodical visits?—They are paying as much attention to those runs which have no rabbits as to those which have them to a large extent. That, I think, is a mistake.

373. Have you any recommendation as to the amendment of the Act itself, beyond saying that on the whole it has worked satisfactorily?—On the whole I am satisfied: I think it would be a pity to alter the Act.

374. You are satisfied with the administration of the Act?—Yes.

375. *Mr. Lance.*] In some cases you think rabbiters ought to be employed?—I say so in some circumstances. I think it is a matter which should be left to the discretion of the landowners whether they should use rabbiters in places where they do not want ferrets; about the homestead, for instance.

376. As to rabbiters, do they not destroy the ferrets?—They do.

377. *Mr. J. McKenzie.*] I was about to ask Mr. Martin whether he has, from his experience, been led to the belief that in the administration of the Act too arbitrary powers are lodged with the Inspector, and whether he has known these powers to be abused?—I cannot say: I have heard complaints made that the provisions of the Act are somewhat confounded.

378. Do you understand the Act well?—I do.

379. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Have the Inspectors power to insist on landowners employing rabbiters and dogs?—He has power to make them clear off rabbits.

380. That is not an answer to my question. Has he power to make them employ men with dogs—rabbiters?—I do not think he has.

381. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Have you anything to say about the administration of the department in regard to Crown lands?—I omitted to state that. Yes; I think that some steps should be taken in regard to Crown lands. The same attention has not been paid to them that has been paid to private lands: the consequence is that a good deal of injury has been suffered.

382. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you any experience of any other method than poisoning with phosphorus, and ferrets?—No; except the rabbiters.

383. Have you never tried bi-sulphide of carbon?—It has a very good effect, but it destroys the natural enemies as well.

384. Formerly the Act was administered by trustees. Is it your opinion that the Act would be better administered locally, as it was then, than as it is now?—I think it is better to administer it as it is now.

385. You do not believe in local administration as it existed in the Act previous to this one?—No.

386. *Mr. J. McKenzie.*] There are frequently cases in Court for the infraction of the Rabbit Act?—Yes.

387. As a general rule do convictions follow?—Not so frequently as they should, I imagine.

388. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Are landowners subjected to penalties?—They should be.

389. After the Inspectors have taken the matter into their own hands and insisted upon the employment of rabbiters, are the owners subject to be fined?—I have not known any cases where they have been compelled to employ rabbiters; but the Inspectors have given instructions that rabbiters must be cleared off.

390. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Is it your opinion that rabbits have diminished in number in Wairarapa?—Very much.

391. Is it your opinion that, under the present Act as it is administered now, the district will, within a reasonable time, be practically free from rabbits?—I believe it will be. I think that great assistance in that direction would be given by making it easy for the Inspectors to deal with Native lands as well as Crown lands.

392. Have not the Inspectors power to deal with Native lands?—There seems to be considerable difficulty in dealing with them. I imagined that there were powers given to deal with them, but they do not seem to be treated in the same way.

393. Do the Natives object?—I think they do; there seems to be some difficulty in the way.

394. I would ask you whether it is within your knowledge that people catch wild rabbits and keep them in hutches, or send them away to other places?—I have no information.

395. In the Hawke's Bay District it is said by the Inspector that, under the Act, he can do nothing in regard to rabbits in hutches; that persons send wild rabbits over there in hutches; that these get loose sometimes and spread throughout the country?—I have no knowledge; a person travelling might catch one or two wild rabbits, and keep them in that way.

396. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Do the Natives eat rabbits?—Yes; they do not care very much about them, but they will eat them.

Mr. C. J. TULLY, examined.

397. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You live in Wairarapa?—Yes.

398. Have you had much experience of rabbits?—Yes; seven years.

399. Have they been in great number on your run?—Yes; in great number. We would have thrown up the farm in two years had it not been for the poison, which stopped the increase.

400. But you have been able to stop the increase?—Yes.

401. How have you done that?—Chiefly by poison; using poisoned grain.

402. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Oats?—Yes; phosphorus and oats.

403. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Was the result satisfactory?—To a certain extent.

404. Have you got them down so that your feed is no longer injured?—We have got them down so that in places where, six years ago, we could not run two hundred sheep, we have lately been running sheep to the extent of six thousand. There are five thousand acres upon which we could not, for the rabbits, run five hundred sheep, upon which we are now keeping six thousand.

405. Do you consider your supply of feed as great now as before the rabbits were there?—Not quite so good, but to a great extent it is.

406. Are you satisfied with the Rabbit Act and the way it is administered in your district?—Yes.

407. Do you think that as it stands it is sufficient to meet the difficulties in the way and capable of bringing about a clearing of rabbits?—Except in one thing. The runholders are compelled by the Inspectors to put on dogs: that is, men and dogs. A good many of us have the idea that the natural enemies of the rabbit are best. These men and dogs kill all the cats, ferrets, and natural enemies they can. We are forced by the Inspector to put on these men.

408. You say that the Inspector compels you?—He compels you in this way: that if you do not do so you will be summoned.

409. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Do they use the gun as well?—Yes.

410. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You think, then, that rabbiters and dogs are undesirable?—If you have rabbiters at all, have them using ferrets—tame ferrets.

411. You mean tame ferrets to put them in the rabbit-hole?—Yes, and turn the rabbits out.

412. Do you find that poisoning answers at well in summer as in winter?—No; we cannot do anything with it: after August it is no use putting poison on the ground.

413. Have you tried by turning up a sod?—It is utterly useless in spring.

414. Do you think it is that the poison has evaporated or that the rabbits will not take it?—The rabbits will not take it.

415. You are in favour of poisoning and natural enemies?—Yes.

416. Have you any reason to suppose that ferrets will attack lambs or sheep?—No.

417. Have you ferrets on your run?—Yes.

418. Have you tried trapping?—Yes, we tried trapping, and caught seventy ferrets.

419. Have you any reason to suppose that the ferrets attacked or killed any of your sheep?—No, I cannot credit that at all.

420. Apparently ferrets are very easily trapped?—Yes, they are the simplest things to catch. If you put down a common gin-trap you will have a ferret in the morning.

421. Suppose in time the ferrets should become a nuisance?—You could either poison or catch them in traps. I have not the slightest fear of the ferrets getting too numerous.

422. You are satisfied with the Act?—The only thing I see to object to is in the matter of cumulative fines. I think that an Inspector should be satisfied if he gets you fined. But if another Inspector comes down upon you, he gets you fined in a cumulative penalty because of a former conviction. In this respect I think there is too much power thrown into the hands of an Inspector.

423. Will you point out what you refer to?—I think there is too much power given into the hands of agents. If you offend them in any way they can get you into a difficulty. It is well known that all lands have rabbits on them: there are only a few people who have been summoned.

424. Do you think that the Act has been carried out with partiality; that some have been summoned and others not?—That was my idea.

425. That it was not administered alike to all?—No. There is a certain block of country: only three persons have been summoned.

426. Might not the reason be that those who were not summoned made greater efforts?—It is impossible they could have done. We sent away 124,000 skins in four months. But all have done good work.

427. You have been fined?—Yes; we have been fined three times.

428. On what ground?—On the ground of having rabbits.

429. Not that you had neglected to kill them?—No; the Inspector in the last case said there was no neglect; yet we were fined because we had rabbits on the place.

430. Simply on that ground?—Yes.

431. Who was the Inspector?—Mr. Orbell.

432. Were the lands of which the occupiers had not been fined, under the same Inspector?—Yes.

433. You do not know why the others were not fined?—No.

434. If he were to act impartially he would summon all who had rabbits on their lands?—He might have done so.

435. How does the Inspector judge: not by results?—Yes; by results.

436. Might not the fact of you having more than others account for it?—That might be his reason.

437. Might he not say you have not been taking the steps necessary?—I cannot say whether that is the way he would look at it.

438. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] I should like to ask a question in reference to what the last witness has said: Do you not suppose that to introduce the stoat and the weasel into this country they would be difficult to get rid of?—No.

439. If these animals can live where every man's hand is against them, with population at the maximum, do you not suppose they would be more difficult to extirpate if they once became

numerous?—I think the destructive habits of the ferret have been made too much of. We have had ferrets for years, and we never lost but one fowl; and not only that, but there was an immense number of ferrets about.

440. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Do you believe that the local administration of the Act—that is, its administration by local bodies, such as County Councils for instance, would be better than the present system of administration?—No; I do not think that would work at all.

441. Is it your opinion that, within a reasonable time, the rabbit pest may be reduced within limits, so that it will not involve any injury to the public?—I think if rabbiters were done away with a sufficient number of the natural enemies would solve the whole difficulty in five years; but if you have rabbiters they will destroy the natural enemies. I have known places for the last two years which were once swarming with rabbits. Nothing has been done there in the shape of poisoning; yet there have been no young ones seen, and the old ones have gone away. It was the ferret that did that.

442. *Hon. Capt. Fraser.*] Then you believe that poisoning, without rabbiters, and after the poisoning, ferrets would be sufficient. What about the dogs?—The dog nuisance is as bad as the rabbits. Dogs have gone wild in all parts of the country.

MONDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. HUGH BELLIS, examined.

443. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Can you tell the Committee anything as to the methods of getting rid of the rabbit pest?—I am sorry to say that rabbits are greatly on the increase in my part of the district. I do not see the necessity for keeping so many Inspectors going about the country. Instead of keeping a lot of men with packs of dogs, I think if every one commenced to poison about the month of May they would do more good than by keeping so many men and dogs.

444. Do they send many dogs?—No; but they are very often about with them.

445. With dogs?—Yes.

446. What kind of dogs?—I cannot say; but they are enough for sheep-worrying.

447. How many?—About three.

448. Dogs?—Yes.

449. And the Inspector?—He comes through to see that you keep on till you destroy the rabbits.

450. Why do you object to it?—I object to them and their going about the run. Some time ago they caused a disturbance between me and them. They are a greater nuisance than the rabbits.

451. Do you do anything to put down the pest?—Yes; I have poisoned; I have also put on men and dogs. I received a notice from the Inspector saying that I should poison a portion of my land which I had already poisoned. This was a narrow strip of land near Castlepoint boundary-fence, about three chains from the river. It is very rough there. The Inspector rides along, and there he sees a good many rabbits. The average width from the fence to the river is about four chains.

452. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Whose property is it?—A portion of it is mine; a portion belongs to Johnston and Company.

453. *Mr. Waterhouse.*] Can you tell me whether ferrets have made their way?—We are breeding some and waiting to turn them out. I was not very well satisfied with the way the Inspectors were doing the work, and I went to the office to see their diaries: the Rabbit Inspector keeps a diary. It was refused.

454. Is there any power to inspect the diary, given under the Act?—I thought they were compelled to let me see it.

455. Have you power to demand an inspection of it?—I thought I had, but it appears that I had not.

456. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Are they ordered to keep a diary?—I believe so; they get paid by the day.

Mr. C. COWAN, M.H.R., examined.

457. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You have had great experience of the rabbit pest?—Yes; I have.

458. Will you state your experience regarding it: but let me first ask whether, in your opinion, you think the Rabbit Act is working satisfactorily or otherwise?—I have been settled in the Southland District for twenty-six years, and the country I occupied was about the first visited by rabbits—on the coast, at a spot situated about forty miles from where we knew they were before. In 1872 it was that I discovered rabbits so far inland. In the course of three years they overran the entire country. They had complete possession, and we could see then that they were gradually making their way north. The first step we took in the district was to carry out the Rabbit Trusts Act. The Government, as you know, afterwards took over that department and combined it with the Sheep Department. From my experience I should say that, had the Government been efficiently represented by appointments properly filled, the machinery would have been adequate to bring about the desired end, and kept the pest within reasonable bounds. In our district we are very much dissatisfied with the conduct of the Rabbit Department.

459. At the present time?—At the present time. Of the Sheep Department we have no reason to complain, for we have been clear of scab for fifteen or sixteen years. Our great objection to the conduct of the Rabbit Department is that Tom, Dick, and Harry are taken into its employment without any reference to fitness or efficiency. Just to show you how this is, I shall give you an instance, from which you may conclude that the prejudice against the department in the district has not been unwarranted. One of the Sub-Inspectors had been previously a pieman and fishmonger. He was a friend of my predecessor, and assisted my predecessor in his canvass. Soon after that

gentleman's return, we find him hoisted into this position. He is a Sub-Inspector at the present time. I have asked the Government to remove him, for the whole district is up in arms. That is not an isolated case; but that has created a prejudice against the department. Now that this pest has been twelve years among us, the people there see the necessity for exertion to keep it within bounds. If the department were efficiently filled, the difficulty would be easily kept in check. My view is that the conduct of the department should be vested in the local body. I believe that, if the counties had the supervision of the conduct of the persons employed under the Rabbit Act, a state of greater satisfaction with the results would have been brought about, for local knowledge and local influence upon the conduct of its officers would be brought to bear very much more quickly than under the present system. We feel very much that the power from which action is to be looked for is centred so far away. I think it could be so arranged: if the control could be given to the local body, to the country the result would be more satisfactory.

460. Then, you would separate the two departments—the Sheep Department and the Rabbit Department?—Yes; I would have them quite distinct.

461. Is that because you think there is too much work devolving upon the staff, so that they cannot perform the two duties: or is it simply that you would make the supervision of the Rabbit Department a local concern?—I have no objection to the conduct of the Sheep Department. I think it is well managed; but to bring about a better state of the Rabbit Department I would have the management localized. There is no reason why the Sheep Department should not be embodied in it; but I have no objection to the Sheep Department.

462. Will you tell the Committee your experience in killing rabbits?—Nothing succeeds so well as phosphorized oats.

463. Have you tried the natural enemies?—I introduced weasels and ferrets.

464. Did you turn many out?—I landed sixteen ferrets and three weasels, and put them out on my own property. Now the country has been overrun with ferrets. Nothing has been seen of the weasels.

465. Have you any reason to complain of ferrets on the ground of sheep being attacked?—Not the slightest.

466. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Do they breed?—Yes.

467. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Are the rabbits decreased in number?—They are not increasing; we have managed to keep them at about the same number for several years.

468. Has the feed much diminished in consequence of the pest?—The power of carrying sheep has much diminished, but there is now an apparent improvement.

469. Is that in the neighbourhood occupied by you?—Yes.

470. Are your neighbours killing them?—All are doing their utmost, but they can only just keep them down to the same point. The summer makes-up for the number reduced in the winter.

471. Can they not take the poison in summer?—We find they do not.

472. We have had evidence from the North Island that rabbits will take the poison in summer as well as winter?—We do not find it so.

473. If true, would not that be a considerable gain?—That probably is in turning over a sod to attract the rabbits.

474. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Would you lay the poison on the sod or under the sod?—On the sod: it is the newly turned-up ground that attracts the rabbits.

475. I suppose the unoccupied Crown lands in Southland are one great source of the rabbit pest?—Yes; a very great source of the pest; but it is not so menacing now as it was some years ago.

476. Suppose the Rabbit Act were administered locally, how would you arrange as to the Government lands?—It appears to me that there is more difficulty with regard to occupied land. Crown lands can be treated much more easily than some time ago. For it should not be forgotten that the snow is an immense factor in reducing the number of rabbits. Originally the rabbits thrived at the bottom of the snow, but after a few years' close eating the roughness has disappeared, and they are now starved above the snow-line.

477. In summer do they go back?—If you poison the ground in winter below the snow-line there is every reason to believe they will be kept within reasonable bounds.

478. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] I remember an occasion when we sent a man up to an altitude of 5,000 feet, and he found the rabbits all dead. It is a fact that just below the snow-line you will clear them very much quicker. The very best rabbits were to be found high up on the mountains; but now they cannot live there.

479. *Hon. the Chairman.*] We have heard a great deal about the Inspectors compelling persons to put on rabbiters with dogs: is that a good method?—No; it is the worst.

480. Then you would recommend simply using poison and the natural enemies?—Yes; ferrets in particular.

481. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] It seems to be your opinion that, as it is, the pest has been got so much under that very much less expenditure in this department may serve the purpose?—Yes; a very much smaller expenditure. Yes; if there is a good Inspector to go over the ground, seeing that people are doing their duty in this matter—so long as local influence were brought to bear on that Inspector; this would be an essential part of the arrangement.

482. If he were appointed by the department, and it were known that he was appointed for this special purpose, having so great an interest in clearing the country of rabbits, they would look after him, and see that he did his duty?—Yes; so long as he had power to select suitable men to assist him. We had very suitable men in the district, but now the riff-raff of the country are foisted upon the Inspector to act as his substitutes.

483. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Are these the rabbit agents?—Yes.

484. They call them also Sub-Inspectors?—I believe so.

485. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] You have complained of political influence being brought to bear in

the employment of Sub-Inspectors: do you think that political influence would not be equally as strong under county authorities?—Local influence would be brought to bear quicker.

486. But local influence is political influence when exercised in the power to elect representatives?—I think it most essential to bring about the strong effect of local feeling in this particular matter.

487. In counties, you know, there is a change of men but once in three years?—Every month the report of the Inspector would come before the Council. I fancy myself that the local feeling would be more successfully brought to bear in this manner.

488. Even in regard to County Councils, is it not the case that the majority of the members would be small proprietors who have not the same interest in the destruction of rabbits as the large proprietors have; but many of whom would have an interest, in the circumstances you mention, in the employment of persons for managing things in their midst. Is it not the fact that these small proprietors exercise a preponderating influence?—No doubt, but the case has become so serious that this feeling cannot have much weight. The interest of the country on this question is understood even by County Councils.

489. Possibly so where it is fully developed: but how would it be before becoming fully developed? You are aware that local influence was once brought to bear on the Trustees under the Act in such a manner as practically to defeat the operation of the Act. If that is continued, what is there to prevent the country being overrun with rabbits again?—The district of Southland was the first in which the Rabbit Trust Act came into operation. There we did not find that the local influence was brought to bear adversely. During that time we had many prosecutions for want of energy—just as much as under the management of the Government.

490. Was it not complained of—the fact of local influence being so strong; so that it led the Legislature to determine that the entire control of this department should be placed under the Government?—Yes.

491. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you keep any rabbiters employed to shoot rabbits?—No.

492. You trust to phosphorus and the natural enemies?—Yes; phosphorized oats.

493. Have you been able to increase your number of sheep of late years?—Yes; gradually.

494. What proportion more have you now than seven or eight years ago?—The first three years I had rabbits on my property my sheep were reduced from sixteen thousand to seven thousand: that was the maximum of reduction when the pest was at the worst.

495. What number are on that property now?—About twelve thousand.

496. Then the continued increase of the number of your sheep you attribute to the presence of the ferret?—Clearly; I attribute it to the effects produced by the phosphorized oats and the ferrets.

497. *Mr. Walker.*] Do the Rabbit Inspectors allow you to confine yourselves to these two remedies—poisoned oats and ferrets?—They do not indicate any process at all.

498. Do they not force you to put on rabbiters?—No: they give notice under the Act; in some cases they follow it up by proceedings in the Resident Magistrate's Court. The Resident Magistrate, as a rule, accepts the *ipse dixit* of the Inspector.

499. At one time you used rabbiters and dogs?—Yes; there was a considerable portion of the population with dogs, employed in trying to extirpate the pest. There are very few dogs employed now; it had rather a disastrous effect upon the proportion of population so employed.

500. Had it any good effect?—We employed a great number.

501. *Hon. the Chairman.*] As long as you had rabbiters were you able to increase the number of your sheep?—No.

502. *Mr. Walker.*] Do you think that the population who take to rabbiting is demoralized?—I have my doubts as to many; it does debase some. What they do afterwards I cannot say.

503. Has it a bad effect on the entire population—on the community as a whole?—I do not think it very desirable: I see a great many girls and boys working at it from day to day.

504. *Hon. Mr. Nurse.*] Do you think these Inspectors have too much power; that in fact they can order you to put on rabbiters against your will?—I have a great objection to many that are employed, but I do not mean to decry the Act.

505. Do you not think that the Act is unfair in allowing the Inspector to order you, under penalty if you refuse, to take steps for the destruction of rabbits which are against your will, because you know them to be ineffectual?—The Act is unfair in that it does not give to the defendant any opportunity of adducing evidence that he has done his best to reduce the rabbits on his property; that is to say, the Inspector's statement is taken to be sufficient.

506. He can state what you have not done?—Yes; and you are prohibited from bringing counter evidence. But as to the Act itself, you cannot be too severe in bringing about the destruction of the rabbit as far as possible.

507. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Is it the case that they have left the places where they were first in your district?—Yes; but they were starved out. There were sandhills in which they used to burrow. They consumed almost the entire vegetation in the neighbourhood, the wind covering the vegetation with sand.

508. Are they away entirely from the places where they were formerly?—Yes, through starvation.

509. You have had perhaps more experience than anybody in the colony: is it your opinion that with phosphorus and the ferret, and without the assistance of rabbiters and traps, you can keep the pest under?—Yes, I am sure of it. I believe the application of phosphorus to oats for the destruction of rabbits was a discovery of momentous interest to the country.

510. *Hon. the Chairman.*] We have evidence that rabbits will leave poisoned oats, but that they will eat poisoned wheat?—We never touched wheat when we found that oats, which was cheaper, would do.

511. Possibly it retains the poison longer?—Yes.

512. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Do you think that this pieman you refer to has done anything to keep down rabbits?—I am sure not.

513. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you any further remarks to make respecting the Act itself?—The only point I would refer to is that adduced by the Hon. Mr. Nurse, that under the Rabbit Act they will not hear contra evidence against the statement of the Inspector. That possibly was necessary in dealing with the pest at first, but now it might be fairly modified.

514. I would draw your attention to the 10th and 8th sections, as to the notices for “neglect to comply with the Act,” and for “continued neglect” after the expiration of “one month:” it has been suggested that “one” month is too short, and that it ought to be “two” months?—I think that would be a fair alteration.

FRIDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 1884.

Mr. J. DRUMMOND, examined.

515. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are Inspector under the Rabbits Act, I believe?—Yes, over a portion of the Wairarapa.

516. Is the Rabbit Act being carried out there strictly?—Yes.

517. Is it working satisfactorily?—Yes.

518. Are the rabbits diminishing?—Oh, yes.

519. We have had a good deal of evidence regarding the rabbits in that neighbourhood?—Yes, there is a wonderful decrease in their numbers.

520. Are you in favour of rabbiters and dogs, of poison, or of ferrets?—A great deal depends upon the circumstances. If the rabbits are very numerous I believe in poisoning. I do not believe in dogs altogether; they seem to harass the rabbits about. Where there are only a few rabbits dogs are the best till you get some other means—till you get the natural enemies.

521. You would not recommend dogs and rabbiters where there are natural enemies, perhaps?—No, I would not recommend them.

522. You think that poisoning and natural enemies—supposing the natural enemies were in sufficient numbers—would keep down the rabbits?—Of course we have had no opportunity in the Wairarapa to test the case, but, as far as I can gather, I believe they will do so.

Mr. G. S. COOPER, Under Secretary, examined.

523. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I would ask you whence the funds for working the Rabbit Act come. It seems that the expense has been very much greater than the amount of money set apart for it: how do they meet these expenses?—Well, there is no fund from which the expenses come; they are charged to Consolidated Fund.

524. And put down as “unauthorized expenditure in excess of appropriation:” that is what they call it?—You will always find every year a list of amounts spent in excess of appropriation, and also unauthorized expenditure, which means without any appropriation at all: these come before Parliament. You will find the excess of rabbit expenditure in the list of amounts spent in excess over appropriation.

525. Are you satisfied with the way in which the work has been done throughout the colony with regard to the Rabbit Act?—I think it has been fairly well done, as far as I can judge: of course it is not always perfect.

526. Referring to the expenditure: do you think it is greater than it ought to have been?—No; I do not see how you could have restricted it much.

527. Have you any check upon it? It was apparently the idea that it was left to the Inspectors virtually to make what arrangements they liked with the agents, and in that way more money was spent than was thought necessary?—It may be: it is quite possible. There are a great number of rabbit agents employed, and there may be a number of men who are useless and unfit for that office. It is impossible that I can say there may not be a waste there; but there is a great deal of money spent in what they call contracts. A man takes a block of country and says he will undertake to poison the rabbits in that country for so much money, say £100 or £150, as the case may be. These contracts are always reported to head quarters. They are reported on, by Mr. Bayly for the Minister's approval, and the District Inspectors do not enter into contracts until they get approval from Wellington.

528. The contracts of course you have control over; but it seemed there was some difference in the case of the agents. We have evidence to show that in some cases the agents got different sums paid to them?—Yes; from 10s. to 15s. a day. They begin at 10s., then they get 12s., and then 15s. if they go on satisfactorily.

529. It seemed that the Inspector had almost unlimited power to give what he chose?—Did you mean the District Inspector or Mr. Bayly?

530. The District Inspector.—No; the District Inspector has not; he has to report and apply for authority in every case.

531. Have you any recommendation to make in regard to the alterations in the working of the Act or in the Act itself?—No; I have not gone into that. Several recommendations have been made by different people—by Mr. Bayly and others; but it is a question that I myself have not gone into.

WEDNESDAY, 17th SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. A. WALKER, examined.

532. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Is there an inquiry prayed for in your district into the working of the Rabbit Act?—Yes; I am an aggrieved party under the present working of the Rabbit Act.

533. You are managing a run?—Yes.

534. On the run you are managing is there a large number of rabbits?—We have poisoned heavily; there has been a great number. There was before I took charge. The company do all

they can to eradicate them. Since I have been there we have done everything that is possible to be done. The Inspector told me, "It is not what you are doing, but what should have been done before;" they keep dogging and bothering us.

535. What are you doing?—We have laid close upon twelve tons of poisoned grain this year; we have bought all the ferrets we could get, and all the appliances; we have four rabbiters on just now, and before poisoning we had seven. We have obtained twenty-six miles of netting.

536. You have rabbiters you say?—Yes.

537. And dogs?—Yes. One man has seventy-five dogs; he had seventy-nine. He works these dogs in two packs, one in the forenoon the other in the afternoon.

538. Are you satisfied with their work?—They have killed a great number.

539. Have you ferrets?—We bought all the Government ferrets.

540. Are you not afraid that the rabbiters and dogs will kill your ferrets?—We are beginning to have some fear. We have determined to give the ferret a fair trial without putting on rabbiters.

541. Have the Inspectors asked you to put on rabbiters?—Yes. I have complained that as a whole the Act is not worked fairly, one man is bothered while another is allowed to go on as he pleases; there is an inquiry being prayed for.

542. Your complaint is that the Act is not put in force equally?—Yes.

543. Have the rabbits decreased since you treated the ground with poison and ferrets?—Yes.

544. You have seen good results?—Yes; I could take you over places where they were in thousands, and now you would not see six in a day.

545. What grain did you use?—Oats and wheat in warm weather. Oats appear to retain the poison longest.

546. Do you use rhodium?—Yes.

547. What do you use besides rhodium, and in what proportion do you mix the materials?—We use anniseed. The proportion is 1lb of phosphorus to 80lb. of grain. I have known places which were completely overrun, and in two months were comparatively free from rabbits.

548. Will they take it as well in summer as in winter?—No, unless you turn up the sod. I have ploughed up a furrow for the purpose. That has been successful. They like to follow a turned-up sod.

549. Do you find that sheep eat the poisoned grain?—They will if you like to risk it. On one occasion I had not time to remove the sheep, and there were four who took it in one day.

550. How do you lay it?—I lay it in small heaps of about fifty grains.

551. Do you think the Rabbit Act has been put in force properly; that it meets all requirements?—It would meet all requirements if put in force properly.

552. I understand that you do not wish us to deal with any appointments which have been made?—Yes: I consider a change desirable.

553. Have you any reason to state as to why the Act should have been put in force against some, and not against others?—The original proprietor and one of the rabbit agents fell out. We had reason to complain of his conduct.

554. Why do you imagine that other people are treated more leniently?—I cannot say.

555. Is it political interest?—I would not like to say.

556. Do you suppose that the Act is being administered partially?—Yes.

557. *Captain Russell.*] Do you propose that the Act should be made absolute, without allowing any discretion to the Inspector?—As it is, the Inspector can read the Act as he likes: he is an irresponsible party. I would leave him as little power as possible.

558. Are there any small settlers in your district?—Yes, there are a few.

559. Does the Inspector make them do their duty?—There is no doubt about that.

560. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Have the rabbits materially decreased?—Yes; they are decreasing.

561. Have you seen any indications of the ferrets?—Yes; unfortunately several were killed.

562. Have the rabbiters killed any?—Yes.

563. Do you find that there are certain descriptions of soil which the rabbits like best?—I know there are certain kinds of soil which they do not care about. They do not care about wet clay soils.

564. Do you breed ferrets?—Yes; we bought the Government ferrets and plant. Mr.

is now breeding for us.

565. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] You say that one rabbit has seventy-five dogs: does he allow them to feed on dead rabbits?—No; it would give the dogs the mange.

566. *Captain Russell.*] You say that you have twenty-six miles of netting: is that for rabbits?—Yes.

567. The run has been subdivided?—Yes; and we have a ring fence round the run.

568. Do you not think that a waste of money?—In scabby districts it has been done for safety.

569. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What is the cost of netting per mile?—I do not know without looking up my books. It cost about £8 per mile for erection.

570. At the meeting at Whareama it was stated that for rabbiting purposes this netting was strongly advocated. I wish to ascertain from yourself the reasons for this netting being advocated?—I did not go to that meeting: I only attended two meetings relating to the scab infection.

571. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You complain of the present management or administration of the Act: Would you advocate local management, or would you prefer to be under the central department?—With rabbits?

572. Would you be under trustees, as formerly?—Yes. I do not know why an Inspector should lay an information against any man, or have powers, without first consulting somebody competent to judge of the facts as to whether there is really a case against such a person or not.

573. If you were a trustee, and found yourself compelled to lay an information against yourself upon the recommendation of the Inspector?—I would certainly assist to carry out the law.

574. And lay an information against yourself?—Yes; and lay an information against myself.

Mr. BAYLY'S examination continued.

THURSDAY, 2ND OCTOBER.

Mr. Bayly : I am instructed to make an explanation with reference to a remark that was made in Mr. Teschemaker's letter in respect to the importation of ferrets and weasels. He wrote at a time when he was not aware of the circumstances that had occurred. He refers to the fact that all the importations of ferrets, stoats, and weasels were not a success. The ferrets, indeed, were not a success, but weasels and stoats were.

575. *Hon. the Chairman*.] But private individuals, I believe, have imported them successfully. We have had evidence here that Mr. Bullen imported several. Then, I understand you that the importation of ferrets was not a success, but that you were more fortunate with the weasels. We would now ask you for information about the Rabbit Department. Are you satisfied with the progress that has been made?—I am, generally.

576. Speaking of Southland, are the rabbits on the increase or decrease?—On the whole, there has been a very large decrease. There are, however, places where the pest is bad, and will be bad; where the features of the country are such that they cannot be dealt with in the ordinary way. Taken as a whole, however, the reduction in the number of rabbits has been very large.

576A. Do you think you will be able to diminish the pest so as to prevent any material destruction of food in future?—My opinion of the matter is this: that with our present appliances we can keep them in check, and reduce them rather more than they are reduced now; but, unless we arrive at some other means of dealing with them, they will be an annual tax upon the country.

577. What progress are you making now?—We are doing rather more than keeping them in check.

578. What are you using?—We are principally poisoning in winter; that is our sheet-anchor on which the whole thing depends—simultaneous poisoning.

579. By owners?—Yes; when we can get them all together.

580. That is upon the occupied lands; but in the south there is a great deal of land not occupied; you recommend simultaneous action to be taken by owners: what would you indicate as simultaneous action on the part of the Government?—There are so many places of that kind which you cannot get at; they are bounded by gullies or water-courses, so that you cannot get near them. These are the places where the pest breeds. They come again on to ground where you had got rid of them previously; you cannot get near enough to deal with the evil, as much of this country is impassable.

581. Are you now speaking of country that is far back from the occupied lands?—Some of this country abuts on the occupied country.

582. Why cannot you get men?—The country is so impracticable.

583. Then the owners cannot do much?—They are taking constant precautions.

584. What do you use?—Phosphorized grain.

584A. What grain?—Both wheat and oats.

585. Is there much difference in the result according as you use either of these?—As far as my own experience goes, the oats are best; but I generally find that people for a change use either: wheat is better to use where sheep are liable to get; they do not take wheat so eagerly as they do oats.

586. What other means do you use?—Fumigators.

587. Is that where there are colonies of rabbits?—Yes; and where you cannot exterminate them otherwise, along rivers, by railways, in towns.

588. Is that an expensive mode?—Yes, very.

588A. More so than poisoning?—Oh, yes; but it is often questionable whether it is desirable to use it.

589. *Hon. Captain Fraser*.] What is it?—We use charcoal or sulphur.

590. *Hon. the Chairman*.] Charcoal only?—Yes; the effect is produced simply from the fumes of the charcoal.

591. Do you use bellows to send the carbonic acid into the burrow?—Yes; but where the burrows are dense the best way is to stop the holes as the fumes are forced through the burrow; the danger, however, in doing this is that you will kill the ferrets as well.

592. Have you turned out Government ferrets?—Yes.

592A. What quantity?—I could tell: it appears on the return.

593. Do they breed?—Yes; I am told that young ones have been seen; but the ferrets are so few comparatively.

594. What else do you use?—We endeavour to prevent the use of dogs, if possible. I have given decided instructions that dogs shall not be used if it is possible to do without them.

595. There are a good number of rabbiters?—Yes.

595A. In what position do they stand with regard to the Inspectors?—I will explain the working of the department. The southern district is divided into so many subdistricts; each county represents a district; each district is placed in charge of one Inspector; he is authorized by the Act, if it is necessary, to employ agents; they are responsible to him; the Inspectors are responsible to the department; they can dispense with the service of the agents they employ; they can do so at any moment. We do not recognize the agents as Government officers; they are not recognized by the department in any way; they are at the discretion of the Inspector, who shows them the work to be done, and explains the nature of the assistance he requires.

596. Then if any of these agents are persons who are unfit for the work which they are appointed to do, you consider that it is the Inspector of the district who is responsible for that?—Decidedly; he is distinctly responsible. Of course he must submit the name of the man to the department, so that if they knew any reason why he should not be employed he would not be employed.

597. Do you in all cases make inquiries?—I do. There may be one or two appointed whom I have personally known.

598. Are there any of these appointments which you discovered after they were made to be unsatisfactory?—None that I know of.

599. For instance, we have it in evidence that a man was appointed who was formerly a pieman, or a seller of trotters, or something of that kind, and that that appointment was very unsatisfactory?—I called upon the Inspector in that case for an explanation. I can produce his explanation. White (?) was the agent referred to; he was employed by Mr. Macdonald.

600. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] And his qualifications were that he was a good canvasser?—I do not know anything of his qualifications.

601. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Did he do his work well?—The Inspector said he did his work well; the fact that he had been a pieman would not be regarded as an objection, if he did his work well.

Hon. Captain Fraser.] But the question is, Does he kill rabbits?

602. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Does he do the work satisfactorily?—The agents have very rarely anything to do with the destruction of rabbits.

602A. What do they do?—Each agent is told off by the Inspector to a certain block of country.

603. Will you be good enough to explain to the Committee; they have been called agents and sub-Inspectors; do you use both terms?—I do not use both terms; I only recognize one class of officers—the Inspectors, who are responsible for the agents they employ.

604. What do the agents have to do?—It is their business to visit each and every place where rabbits are reported to be in considerable number, and to which place they would be sent by the Inspector; after each trip they report to the Inspector the state of the place or places they have visited: it is his duty then to ascertain whether their report is correct; if the report is correct, and proceedings are thought necessary, the Inspector immediately takes proceedings. Without the agent, inspection is useless. It is through the agent that he gets his account of matters in the places visited, and the evidence upon which proceedings are taken.

605. As I understand you, if you had not the agent you must have another man beside the Inspector?—Yes; the agent is, if I may so speak, the vehicle on which the Inspector depends for getting his evidence. You must have either agents or a great number of Inspectors to collect the evidence.

606. You have made a recommendation with regard to the Government lands: will you explain to the Committee the position of these unoccupied lands in regard to this question of the rabbit pest: did I understand you to say that, with the exception of some small blocks of bush reserves, they were a great source of danger?—Speaking of reserves, I think I more pointedly referred to them.

607. Will you explain?—There are innumerable reserves, especially in Otago, that have been set aside for all sorts of purposes. These reserves are not looked upon by the bodies to which they belong as land for which they are responsible in respect to the obligations under the Act. They shirk the responsibility in every way they can; in fact, for the purpose they repudiate the ownership; consequently the whole burthen falls on the department of clearing the rabbits from reserves. Many of these reserves are available for pastoral purposes: they are generally small blocks, and many men would be glad to take them if they were allowed to have them upon an undertaking that no rabbits should be allowed to remain on them. I might mention one block of 3,000 or 4,000 acres: it lies there year after year, and we have to clear it. It is "hundreds," it is commonage, but they do not clear the rabbits off it. We have written to them over and over again on the subject, but they will not take the responsibility. I believe that if let upon an undertaking to keep the rabbits down there are people who would take up a good many of these reserves. I would recommend that where the ownership of blocks of this description is repudiated they should be declared "abandoned lands;" that they should be let for one, two, or three years, as the case might be, to some person or persons who would keep the rabbits down: when this period of one, two, or three years was up, the lands might be returned to the purpose for which they were set aside. We have at present to know each of these reserves, and the circumstances connected with it; we have to provide men for the purpose of keeping the rabbits down in each; they are an endless source of excuse for the owners of land abutting on them not doing their duty. There is also the case of "hundreds," the land adjoining which has been sold with the condition of grazing cattle upon the "hundred."

608. How would you deal with that?—I do not know how it can be done; it is hardly for me to say. There must, I should think, be some special legislation upon it.

609. Then you would throw the responsibility on the bodies in whose hands they are, and compel them to take some steps to keep the rabbits upon the land down?—Yes.

610. That would require legislation, you say?—Yes, because it is impossible to obtain a conviction at present.

611. Has the Government expressed any opinion on the subject?—No.

612. Have you taken every possible precaution?—Yes.

613. Have the Government communicated with you upon this subject?—No.

614. Nothing has been done?—No.

615. The Committee would like to know all the particulars connected with this department?—I have embodied everything connected with it in my report. If there is anything further, and I can recollect it, I will give the Committee all the information in my power. I think I have dealt with everything. The returns are attached to the report.

616. We have had it in evidence that poisoned grain and turning out ferrets, or the natural enemies, are the best remedies for keeping rabbits down, but that using rabbiters and dogs is a false step?—It is, undoubtedly: I have no doubt whatever on the matter myself: I consider that using dogs is a mistake.

617. Do you consider that the Inspector has power to compel the owner of any property to pursue a certain course in killing rabbits?—I do not; I consider it is the Inspector's duty to see that they are kept down, allowing the owner to adopt whatever means he chooses.

618. Have you sent a circular as to the best methods which he should adopt?—Yes; I sent a circular. [Circular put in.]

619. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Was that the last?—No, there was a subsequent one.

620. Was that sent to the agents?—We do not know the agents.

621. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You say that the Inspectors are responsible for the agents?—Yes.

622. *Mr. Dodson.*] But you sent a copy of that document to each Inspector?—Yes.

623. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Apparently, in these instructions there is no reference to the point alluded to; that is, as to the power of the Inspector to compel an owner to adopt a certain course?—It has never been held that such should be done; but the Inspector might do a good deal by recommending from his own experience certain things to be done.

624. Would you leave him discretion?—He has to see that rabbits are kept down: it does not matter to the department what steps are taken. If rabbits are found on a place notice is sent to the owner.

625. That he must kill?—Yes.

626. After that if they are found, and that, in the opinion of the Inspectors, sufficient means have not been taken to clear them, the owner is summoned and fined. It would appear from that that the "opinion of the Inspector" has to guide the course to be adopted?—He must give information as to how it should be done, if he knows. I know of no instance where that course has been taken in which any difficulty occurred: it is only where sufficient steps have not been taken.

627. You leave the Inspectors to act upon the results of the steps that have been taken?—Yes.

628. But where the owner had killed a great number, not only on his own land, but coming from infested land adjoining, the results would not be shown?—There it would be the duty of the Inspector to proceed against that person. He could not adjudicate himself; he would leave it to the Bench to decide whether it was a serious breach of the Act or otherwise.

629. My object in asking the question is that some of the witnesses in their evidence have complained that the Inspector ordered them to put down the pest with rabbiters and dogs?—If the Inspector ordered that I hold that he decidedly made a mistake.

630. *Mr. Dodson.*] What is that?—If the Inspector gave a distinct order for that he exceeded his authority.

631. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you examine the diaries?—Invariably.

631a. Then you would see whether the order was given or not?—Yes.

Mr. Walker: We have had before us a witness who spoke to a prosecution and conviction in his own case, because he refused to put on rabbiters.

Hon. the Chairman: What case was that?

Mr. Walker: Mr. Bell's case. There it was stated the officer ordered him to do certain things which were against his (Mr. Bell's) judgment.

Mr. Dodson: He said it was against what he (Mr. Bell) thought the proper means, and as a consequence that he (Mr. Bell) gave up ferrets.

632. *Mr. Walker.*] Could you produce that Inspector's diary?—Yes; you can every one in the service if it is required.

633. *Mr. Dodson.*] When: within what time?—Within a quarter of an hour.

634. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] How often do they send in their diaries?—Every month.

635. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Mr. Bell's evidence was in effect that the order to put on rabbiters caused the loss of all the money that had been expended upon turning out the ferrets, which were killed by traps and dogs?—Here are papers connected with Mr. Bell's case.

636. Was it brought under your notice?—Not in the way it is put. I received several communications; one a very long letter from Mr. Bell in respect to which a gentleman was appointed to make inquiries; in another case, the Resident Magistrate was requested to furnish particulars; in another case, the Chief Inspector was sent to inquire: none of their decisions—for what reason I do not know—were favourable to Mr. Bell.

637. *Mr. Dodson.*] But these probably were concerned in the convictions?—None of the inquirers blamed the department.

638. But the real question is whether Mr. Bell ever received instructions from the Inspector to employ dogs. He said he did, and the consequence was that the ferrets were killed by the traps and dogs?—That, as a formal complaint, never reached me. I was aware of a petition with a copy of a letter attached to the petition from Mr. Corbet and others.

639. *Mr. Buchanan.*] I think it an instructive question to put to Mr. Bayly whether, having so many complaints coming before him as Superintendent Inspector, he visited the locality and inquired into the circumstances, so forming his judgment on the spot?—I went once for the purpose mentioned; I next went at the instigation of people who complained of the state that Mr. Bell's country was in. I think Mr. J. McKenzie, M.H.R., Waihemo, knows more about that affair than any one else.

640. *Hon. the Chairman.*—Not the gentleman who is on this Committee?—No.

641. His name was mentioned as offering evidence?—Yes; I made inquiries and rode over the whole of that—or rather over the greater part; it was overrun then; in some places very thickly.

642. If such an order were given would it have issued from you?—It would have issued from the Inspector.

643. Not from an agent?—Certainly not: he has no power to give an order at all; he has no power whatever; he has nothing to do with it at all; he has no right to interfere.

644. As to the Inspectors, are they in every case Inspectors under the Sheep Act as well?—They are—that is, the Inspectors.

645. The districts being counties?—Yes.

646. Are you satisfied with these Inspectors: are they persons that you can trust with the powers which they appear to exercise under the Act; are they fitted for their duties?—I am satisfied with them as a body. They are not all perfect; but, as a body, I am satisfied with them.

647. Are there any that you are not satisfied with?—There is no man in the service that any complaint has been lodged against.

648. That is hardly an answer to the question?—As far as I know, they have performed their duties properly.

649. That is hardly the question. You say that you know them personally, save one or two. Are you satisfied they are competent and good men for the work?—I am; they are the best men I could get.

650. It has been stated here that the Inspectors are not fit for their positions in consequence of their being selected from a class of men who could not be supposed to have the necessary qualifications; that they are taken from an improper class of men?—I am not sure whether the witness who gave that answer discriminated between the agent and the Inspector.

651. That is the point I wish to come to, for the evidence goes to show that the agents have exercised certain powers?—They have none.

652. Do you say they have no power?—They really have no powers.

653. If that evidence referred to the Inspectors, would you agree with that statement?—No, not if it referred to the Inspectors.

654. Then you think they are properly fitted for their duties?—As far as the Inspectors are concerned.

655. Then, as far as the agents are concerned, they have no powers at all for killing rabbits?—None whatever.

656. Their duty is to report simply?—Yes, to report simply.

657. You have heard complaints such as we have heard of?—Only one in Otago; that was the case of Mr. Bell.

658. Did you draw the attention of the Inspectors to these portions of the circular?—Yes.

659. You wrote it, and it distinctly defines their position?—Yes.

660. In view of the complaints that were made, do you not think it would be well to remind the Inspectors that agents have no authority?—It was only within a few weeks since that this was brought under my notice: I would, in the ordinary course, draw the Inspector's attention to it, telling him, at the same time, that if the statement was correct he had overstepped his duty.

661. Do you pursue the same course in other parts of the colony as you have in the south with regard to agents?—There is a slight difference in Wairarapa.

662. What is the difference?—There were three agents there whom it was deemed necessary, as they were skilled men, to appoint as acting-Inspectors of sheep, so as to give help to the Inspector who had charge of the scabby portion of that district, and they were to have every means of obtaining all the information that could be got about the flocks, and how to deal with them, with the necessary powers. These agents could not have acted then without their appointments being legalized. They were appointed acting-Inspectors, but they were not on the permanent staff of Inspectors.

663. To whom do you refer?—To Messrs. Vallance, Cameron, and Smith. With regard to Vallance, he is a rabbit agent; he was appointed a Sheep Inspector, which appointment gave him the legal power necessary to deal with infected sheep: in that capacity he travels through the country; the Inspector, whose agent he is, could order him to go and inspect a lot of sheep if the Inspector had not the opportunity of going himself.

664. Have you ever heard complaints of some of these men in Wairarapa entering upon lands and bringing with them two or three dogs of various descriptions?—I have never heard of it.

665. Do you think it would be right for an Inspector to go over runs in this way with dogs?—As a rabbit agent it would be necessary for him to go upon the land; this would be one of the facilities afforded him, to see whether there were rabbits there or not: but a man by himself might look about for a week over a considerable area before he would see any rabbits; if he were accompanied by one quiet trained dog, I cannot see that it would do any harm.

666. But if he went there with more than one?—I do not see the necessity of it.

667. With regard to these lands, they come under the authority of the Crown Lands Department: do you think the relations of your department with that department is satisfactory in respect to dealing with such lands; could the Colonial Secretary act, or would he act without reference to the Lands Department?—We have invariably to refer to them.

668. Would it facilitate matters if some change were made in that respect?—I think myself that it should appertain to the Lands Department; that both should work together, both the Lands and the Rabbit Departments; both are directly interested in the same object. Perhaps I might have misunderstood your last question by confounding it with a question put by the Hon. Mr. Campbell. I may state that the Inspector forwards contracts for destroying rabbits on these lands: the Colonial Secretary deals directly with that; I mean with that work on Crown lands.

669. Then you have not any difficulty arising out of relations of your department to other departments of the Government, such as the Lands Department, in dealing with the pest on Crown lands?—The only difficulty that I see is in clearing rabbits from runs that have been given up and have fallen in; we have to spend several hundreds of pounds yearly in destroying rabbits upon them. Having fallen in they are after a time put up to auction or offered for sale; often a period of very valuable time elapses before these runs are disposed of, during that time the rabbits increase; there is a greater effort to be made to get rid of them; the Government has had to spend several hundred pounds in keeping them down meanwhile; the value of the property has depreciated if rabbits increase upon it, so that it has to be cleared over again.

670. But all Government land has to be put up to auction, and due notice must be given: what would you recommend?—I think I have mentioned it in my report: my recommendation is that they should be let forthwith, so as to find ownership for them.

671. *Captain Russell.* That they should be leased or sold?—These lands are often put up at a rental which they will not fetch; the consequence is that the letting or sale is postponed from

time to time; all this while the rabbits are increasing. They might be put up at a less rental or a bonus might be given for the destruction of the rabbits on them.

672. *Hon. the Chairman.*] With regard to the Marlborough district, it appears that on the runs rabbits are being kept down satisfactorily by ferrets which have been turned out?—Undoubtedly.

673. You say that would not be sufficient in the south: are you aware of any difference in the country or in the rabbit which accounts for it?—There is a difference in the country; the climate in the south is more severe, and the country in the south is not so well adapted for the ferret. In that part of the country where the ferret has been most successful it is partly timbered; the climate is comparatively very much milder; it is a good many years since the experiment has been started. It has yet to be learned for certain whether it will do as well in the south, which is cold, as in a warmer climate.

674. Is there any difference in the rabbit?—In the Kaikouras it is the silver-grey rabbit; in the south it is the real wild rabbit.

675. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Do you know the Benmore Run: there are ferrets there all over the run; they have exterminated the rabbits?—So I have heard.

676. Do you know the altitude of some portions of it; 6,000 feet, is it not?—Yes; I have seen Benmore under snow for twelve weeks.

677. Is it a dry country?—It is a dry country.

678. Do you think a dry country suits ferrets?—Yes; I believe the "natural enemy" to be the solution of the difficulty.

679. *Mr. Walker.*—Is it not a fact that in South Canterbury the rabbits do not burrow, but live in the tussock?—I cannot say authoritatively; I have seen them in the tussock, but I have not seen them in burrows.

680. But, supposing that to be the habit, would not that account for it?—I think it is rather the fact of not being hunted; the rabbit will naturally form colonies, and, if hunted much, they will burrow for protection.

Hon. Captain Fraser: I have seen rabbits burrow in South Canterbury.

682. You spoke of the introduction of stoats and weasels; have you heard any complaints against them?—Not personally. I have received any amount of applications for them. The accounts I have received are the reverse of complaints.

683. Who asked for them?—I have received applications from all parts.

684. We have had evidence here that they were likely to do a great deal of harm?—I do not think so. However, to preclude the possibility of them doing any harm, as far as these persons complaining are concerned, I had them turned out right at the back of an impractical country, where nothing could destroy them—on a piece of land where they cannot wander sufficiently far.

685. Have you any knowledge of the mongoose?—None.

686. Have you any knowledge of the badger?—None.

Mr. Walker: There are authorities who say that the badger is herbivorous.

688. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] You know nothing of the mongoose?—A few of them have been tried in Marlborough, but I do not think that any result was ascertained, for they all got away.

689. *Captain Russell.*] Do you think it would be of any use, in endeavouring to stop the spread of rabbits, to put up a rabbit-proof fence as a frontier line, protecting that with weasels?—I do not think the fence will obviate the evil; if the pests get as far as the fence they will get to the other side, or they will be put over by those who may be interested in doing that, to restore their livelihood. It is a good thing, in any case, to erect a fence, but I do not think it will suffice.

690. The Inspector endeavoured to get the Government to erect a rabbit-proof fence on the boundary between Wellington and Hawke's Bay, did he not?—I think it was so.

691. Was your opinion asked by the Government?—No, it was not referred to me.

692. You did not know that the Government were applied to to join in the erection of a rabbit-proof fence?—I did know that much.

693. It was not referred to you?—I gave no opinion.

694. Ought it to have been referred to you?—If they were determined to act, I have no doubt it would have been referred to me.

695. Do you know the locality?—Yes; Waimata.

696. Do you not think that would be a good place to prevent the spread of rabbits?—Yes; an attempt has been made to arrive at that. One fence such as you describe has been put up a certain distance: there are one or two rabbit agents closely watching that country; as soon as they see any traces of rabbits the ferrets are turned out.

697. Do you know who are the executive officers?—The man who has charge of the ferrets; the fence is on the Sheep Inspector's boundary.

698. Do you know who is practically carrying on the work?—I presume it is the Chief Inspector, Mr. Paisley.

699. You are not aware that it is really a committee of settlers?—Not independently of the Inspector.

700. You know the principal movers in the matter?—Yes.

701. Do you know how the funds for it are collected?—I do not know.

702. I may mention that they come from a voluntary rate; but I was about to ask you whether it would be desirable to have a certain district proclaimed in which a rate might be levied for the purpose?—If the necessity arises for that. I think it should be dealt with in the same way as other parts of the country.

703. Do you think that the Government holding the adjacent land should have joined in the expense of taking the necessary steps to stop the pest?—I think so.

704. If this matter were referred to you, you would have advised that the Government should join?—I might have done so; I might have preferred to recommend that the natural enemies should be turned out.

705. Do you not think that such a fence serves as a frontier on which you can work?—It is a great help, no doubt; it is a help to a certain extent.

706. Do you not think it is wise to block out certain area of country?—Decidedly; that is endeavouring to be done. At present, whenever rabbits are known to be near or coming near, steps are taken to stop them if possible.

707. You cannot give a reason why Government refused to do what was asked?—I think I recollect the matter being spoken of. I think, whatever objection was raised, it was to this effect: that this being only a portion of the colony, if fencing were granted, numerous applications would come in from all parts of the colony. This, I believe, was what precluded it being done.

708. Do you not think it would be advisable that there should be an efficient barrier between the country that is at present clear and the introduction of the rabbit?—Such a course would be beneficial; there is no doubt about that.

709. Do you think it would tend to check them very much?—It would.

710. You do not attach much importance to the erection of rabbit-proof fences, I believe?—I do, in subdividing stations; but I think the natural enemies can much more quickly prevent the influx of the pest upon the surrounding lands. [Captain Russell put in a map of the district referred to, with the report of the local committee.]

711. Do you not think that it would be advisable, the Crown owing large reserves in that neighbourhood, that the Government should take steps to join the settlers in clearing the country of rabbits?—Decidedly; but I think that is being done as far as it is possible to do it.

712. But it is done by a voluntary rate contributed by the sheepowners of Hawke's Bay. You do not think it possible to frame a principle by which a rate could be levied for this purpose, although the people of Hawke's Bay find it necessary to rate themselves, the Government not giving any assistance?—That such a boundary would be of service there is no doubt: it is rather a difficult question to answer, as it comprehends so much; it is not confined to Hawke's Bay alone.

713. Quite so. We have there found that the law is not sufficient for us. We have been obliged to go outside the law. The position is this: that those who are public spirited pay subscriptions, while those who are not can refuse to do so. Do you not think there should be a clause under which there should be a special rate?—I think, if that could be done, there must be addenda that would apply to each locality, and not in the general Act.

714. *Mr. Buchanan.*] The diary is a guide, is it not, for the satisfaction, I presume, of the head of the department?—Yes.

715. You know, of course, that the Inspectors have very large powers?—I am aware of it.

716. Are you aware whether, in any district, they are so much in fear of the Inspector that they would not allow their true feelings to appear?—No; I was not aware of that.

717. If you receive no complaint you take it for granted that things are satisfactory?—Unless when I am there myself I know nothing to the contrary.

718. If the Inspector sent rabbiters with, say, thirty dogs, and a request that you should clear, suggesting this method as a very good plan, would that appear in this diary?—No; it would not.

[*Mr. J. C. Buckland* requested that the monthly report from Mr. Shaw, of Mount Ida, should be put in. Put in accordingly.]

719. I presume the diary is sent to the office at Wellington, and kept there as a record?—Yes; all of them.

720. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Is it sent to you first?—Yes.

721. Then you send it to Mr. Cooper?—Yes; it remains in the office, and if there is anything in it I would take notice of it.

722. *Mr. Buchanan.*] The Committee understand you to say that you yourself attached great value to the natural enemies from information you had gained up to the present date?—I do.

723. Poisoning first, and the natural enemies afterwards?—Yes.

724. I shall read the 9th clause of the Rabbit Nuisance Act. I will next read the report of Inspector Macdonald [reads], in which he speaks of poisoning to October; from that to January, hunting; fumigating with bi-sulphide of carbon. Then he goes on to say of the ferrets, "I have no opinion of them as enemies. Wild ferrets are numerous in Southland. The ferrets will in time be as numerous as the rabbits were before. The ferret now covers a large area," and so on. Now, looking to the fact that the opinion of the Inspector carries the conviction of the Court, and noting your own reply to the Committee—noting also your reply to a question put by one of the Committee as to whether or not you were satisfied that your Inspectors were men upon whom you could thoroughly rely on being fit men to apply an Act giving them large powers—do you think that an Inspector deliberately framing his report in this language is the right man in the right place?—He is, decidedly, a very good Inspector. I think he has the confidence of those among whom he is. The fact of his reporting his convictions does not say that he omitted to do his duty.

725. The landowner is had up before the Court for non-destruction of rabbits. Then the conviction hangs on the opinion of the Inspector. The owner, we will say, has followed the steps which you told this Committee would be the best for destroying rabbits. Now, taking the report of Mr. Macdonald, would not conviction ensue because the owner followed the exact steps which you proposed to be best, and because these steps were opposed to what Mr. Macdonald thought best to be done. He enjoys your confidence. The landowner gives his evidence that he took the means which you, the Head Inspector, thought best. But Mr. Macdonald thought these not efficient means. The Court would convict upon the opinion of the Inspector by giving the information. The Court would be bound to accept that opinion?—There is no case in point where Inspector Macdonald has had any conviction on the grounds expressed in his report. I do not agree with his idea, as far as the ferrets are concerned; nor do I believe they are getting numerous, as he states. It cannot possibly be. I think his a rather overdrawn statement.

726. I do not think you have exactly answered my question, whether or not conviction followed

in the case before the Court, if the owner followed the course which you gave to the Committee as the best?—I do not think, if the landowner did his duty properly, that any conviction would follow.

727. Will you explain to the Committee?—If he got down the rabbits sufficiently low no prosecution would have taken place and no conviction would follow: the number of ferrets turned out might be wholly insufficient to deal with the difficulty.

728. But the landowner takes steps to poison, and follows that up with the natural enemy?—Yes; if he turns them out in sufficient numbers.

729. Your opinion would be that the landowner had taken the necessary steps?—Decidedly.

730. Mr. Macdonald holds the reverse opinion; my question, therefore, is this: if he carried out the Act would it not follow that the landowner would be convicted for doing what you stated was best to be done?—Undoubtedly, if that course is followed in discharge of his duty as Inspector of the district.

731. Agents are paid so much a day, are they not?—Yes.

732. In the case of some agents they are paid half-time for Sunday?—Yes; I think so.

733. Do you fancy it is good to leave the agent to fill in the time that he has actually worked?—I have stated that the Inspector would be responsible for all that. The diary goes through the Inspector's hands and he indorses it.

734. My general question is, whether you approve of a method of payment which evidently subjects the agent to a heavy temptation—the temptation of returning to his Inspector a full day's work for what was only half a day's work?—I do not know how you could place any other check on it than the supervision of the Inspector.

735. I think there are one or two places where the manner of work is different?—If there is any place in particular I can explain it in a moment; in some cases where men are placed in a rough country or in expensive districts.

736. In the Wairarapa they are paid half-time for Sunday?—There they would be acting-sheep Inspectors.

737. Is it not better that they should be employed at a certain rate per annum, but subject to dismissal at a month's notice?—I hardly think so, because that would be immediately making a permanent staff of huge dimensions, which could not be dispensed with in the same manner as these agents can.

738. You are satisfied that such engagements could not be made without bringing them under the regulations of the Civil Service?—Yes, that is it.

739. Have you inquired into it?—Yes; in my original reports I pointed out that very fact.

740. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] If you were managing a run, would you allow any overseer so much a day, and let him claim compensation?—This is done for the purpose of avoiding compensation.

741. I want you to answer my question?—I can hardly follow it.

742. If you were managing a run, would you allow your overseer or your shepherd to send you in any document he thought fit as a claim for remuneration?—Certainly I would not allow my overseer or any one else to do so.

743. Your answer to Mr. Buchanan would make it appear as if you allowed it?—No; it is the same as in any other case: you pay him according to his work; you would not pay a first-class man as you would one who had less capacity or skill.

744. Do you not think it would be a desirable thing to stop it?—I do not know any other means of paying.

745. Why not pay a salary, and let us know the end of it?—They would then become Civil servants on the Civil list, and could claim compensation on retiring from the service.

746. *Hon. Captain Fraser.* I see that, in one case, you were asked 15s. a day, when similar agents were receiving 10s.?—Owing to the friction in this particular district, and the necessity of keeping these men independent of any favour, they were paid slightly higher; the difference was in order to prevent that.

747. You have stated that none of these agents can be employed without your confirming the appointment?—They are all submitted: the names are submitted to me: if anything is known of them I am made aware of it.

747A. Supposing you were in Auckland?—He would be advised by telegraph.

748. I see a charge of £120 here in one case for poisoning "commonage:" why has the Government to pay for cleaning commonages which are in the occupation of local bodies?—There must be a very good reason for it.

749. I should like to know the reason?—I think this is the reason: the obligation to clean the commonage is repudiated by County Councils; the necessity for it is repudiated by County Councils, who, I think, are not the absolute owners.

750. That surely cannot be called Crown land?—I know that County Councils will not clean these lands, they repudiate the responsibility.

751. Yet they occupy?—Well, I cannot say.

752. Is not this simply an endowment for the municipality. They do occupy, but the public money is employed to do what they are bound to do. Why is the runholder obliged to clean such land?—If there was not a good reason for it it would not be done.

753. You have documents relating to it?—I believe I have.

754. Who gives you authority?—It is submitted to me, and I recommend it or otherwise.

755. What is the actual amount?—It is shown in the appendix to my return.

756. Can you give me an approximate idea?—It is here.

757. On all the Crown lands?—There are 44,458 acres; the tenders accepted altogether would amount to £3,886 5s. 6d.

758. How many bales of rabbitskins did you get?—I do not know that we have exported any rabbitskins; the land is away back in the country; it would not pay to collect them.

759. Who gets them?—I do not know that any one gets them; the men employed receive so much a piece, and the skins as well; the money represented here is simply for poisoning land.

760. Is it by tender?—Yes.

761. I should like to see it?—Yes; but the only skins we get are from small sections.

762. You were speaking of a particular hundred, Mataikuna; I think it is 1800 acres?—If the runholders will keep the rabbit down I think they would get the use of it. I can give you all the information.

763. Is it right that the runholders should have to pay for lands which the County Councils have the ownership of?—The case to which you refer is not a solitary instance.

764. I want to know what steps are taken in such cases?—In all cases relating to areas of this kind it has been my endeavour, if possible, to rid the Government of the liability; I think I have shown that in my report. In each case of this description an inquiry has been made as to whether they are Crown lands: if they are Crown lands they must be dealt with; if they are a portion of unsold hundreds they are treated as unsold lands.

765. If there are 1,800 acres of this land to be cleaned, they who have the benefit of it should pay for that, if they are using it?—They use it, but they do not pay for it.

766. There is an entry of 1,833 acres in the Tiger Head District; £120 have been paid by the Government, while a certain runholder is getting the advantage of the ground?—Yes; I have pointed that out every year.

767. Is Mr. Cooper aware of it?—Yes; he is perfectly aware of it.

768. Has he communicated with the Lands Department?—I have made not merely one but a dozen inquiries of the Lands Department. Whenever it has been possible to get rid of the liability have done so. I have in every case endeavoured to shift the responsibility.

769. On the chain in front of large rivers, are you responsible?—Yes; in some cases.

770. Wakatipu?—No.

771. Mataura?—We had to do it in one part.

772. Cromwell, that is unsold land?—Yes; there are some cases in which we are compelled to do it.

773. Do you not think when they chain their own property they ought to do it?—Yes; but they do not do it.

774. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Are you of opinion generally that parties are doing all they can to eradicate the rabbit-pest?—I believe they are; I have no reason to doubt it.

775. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] If it can be proved that poisoning and the natural enemy, ferrets, stoats, and weasels, can get rid of the rabbit-pest, do you not think it would be advisable to get rid of the abominable system of dogs and traps?—Yes.

776. Do you know that many of these dogs are running wild killing sheep?—I have mentioned that in my report. I know that £5 reward has been offered for them.

777. Do you know that the Government brought into this country weasels and stoats?—Yes; I sent the weasels up to Hawea, on the Timaru Creek. The stoats were taken——

778. On the Wanaka?—Yes; to where it was likely ground.

779. Were the whole of the weasels turned out?—Yes, and the stoats on the other side.

780. Are you aware that, when they arrived, I waited on Mr. Oliver and represented to him that they should be divided equally between Otago and Canterbury, and that they should be sent to places where rabbits were most abundant. Mr. Oliver assured me that that would be done.

781. But you have chosen to act differently; by whose authority did you act?—The whole thing was submitted to me.

782. By whom?—It was left to me; I acted on my own responsibility; it was about the time of the dissolution of Parliament; I was allowed to act as I thought fit.

783. I think you showed great want of judgment in putting them on a country where they could not be got at?—The rabbits abound on the borders of it: they are away from civilization, where they cannot be molested.

Hon. Captain Fraser.] Instead of being useful as intended, these animals will now most likely perish. You put them in a place where there are hard frosts every winter.

Mr. Dodson: Mr. Bullen, who has considerable experience, informed me that no better place could have been selected.

784. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Do you recollect my sending to you and asking you to let me have some?—There were so many applications that if I had had ten times the number I could have disposed of them.

785. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] How could you have refused the Hon. Mr. Campbell and myself?—I acted on my own judgment; there was no member of the Government here at the time.

786. *Hon. the Chairman.*] But you must have submitted the matter to some authority?—I submitted the matter to Mr. Cooper: I asked him whether I should take the responsibility on my own shoulders, and he said "Yes." It should also be remembered that these animals will not stand captivity for any length of time: the sooner they were again out in their wild state the better.

787. You judged the course you have taken to be the best to pursue?—Yes.

788. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] Are there any rabbits where they are?—Yes; they are just on the outside border of the rabbits.

789. *Mr. Dodson.*] You have no reason to think that you made a mistake in turning them out in that place?—No; I have no reason to think that I made a mistake. Many persons have told me that I adopted the best plan.

Hon. the Chairman.] A good deal has been said about unoccupied lands of which local bodies are the ostensible owners: is there anything in the Act that would compel County Councils or other bodies to clear such lands?—No; it is almost impossible to obtain a conviction.

790. For instance, suppose the Governors of the Otago University?—They are a corporate body; you can get at them.

791. But surely you could compel the County Council?—I do not say you cannot; there is however, some difficulty about it. I cannot make it out; it is a question beyond my legal acumen. Both commonages and hundreds come within Crown lands according to my reading of the Act.

792. With regard to laying poison: is that always done by contract?—Not always; as a rule it is, but not always.

793. Whom do you employ?—Occasionally we have to employ weekly men. Where the lands are not of too great extent we have to employ persons who will cart the stuff about.

794. Has the Government used the block of land near Wakatipu for rabbit purposes?—No; such was reported, but it is not the case.

Hon. the Chairman: About a year ago a lease was prepared with the full expectation that it would be signed.

Hon. Captain Fraser: Was that the Navora?

Hon. the Chairman: Ostensibly it was to be for running sheep; in reality they were going to make a rabbit-farm of it.

Hon. Mr. Campbell: 65,000 acres!

Hon. Captain Fraser: A nursery for rabbits.

795. *Hon. the Chairman*: There has been no lease for within twelve months?—None.

796. Was there an understanding that there was a lease to be given?—I am not aware.

797. *Mr. Buchanan*: I understood you to say that it did not matter what method was taken to destroy rabbits, so long as that object was accomplished: have the Government been using the ferret and weasel in the expenditure for obtaining which you concurred. Taking, for instance, Mr. Macdonald's report, it is evident that he is in favour of dogs, poison, and traps, not ferrets. Now, Government land adjoins the land under his charge: what is the effect of having such an Inspector there?—I do not think he means carrying out what he suggests: I do not think that, because he holds those opinions, he would act against the judgment of the department.

798. But, if he is allowed to employ men and dogs, will he not do so in preference to employing the natural enemy?—I do not think it would be necessary to interfere.

799. Would it be advisable, in your opinion, to issue another circular dealing with the question of efficient means, so to bring about as far as possible a uniform practice as to what the advice of Inspectors should be to owners? You have mentioned that it was the duty of the Inspectors to guide the landowners: you perceive that a great disparity of action must take place among Inspectors holding various opinions; do you think it advisable to deal with this question?—Decidedly, when I am in possession of the information required to draw it up.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

DEAR SIR,—

Te Rangitumanu, Masterton, 22nd September, 1884.

I am sorry I am unable to attend before the Joint Sheep and Rabbit Committee on the 24th instant. As it was uncertain if I could attend or not, I did not answer your telegram ere this.

I should be sorry if any action of the House should in any way prevent the speedy extermination of scab in the Wairarapa, or should in any way allow sheep to be moved where there is the least risk of their spreading scab. The present Act is hardly strict enough in this, as only two years since scab was brought to the racecourse here, where it remained undiscovered for months. I feel sure that some settlers will not exterminate it until they feel the pecuniary loss entailed by harbouring it.

With respect to rabbits, I feel sure the only way to cope with them is their natural enemies, particularly the stoat. I have had many years' experience with rabbits in England, and have not known an estate in England, where the natural enemies have had free run, where the rabbits have increased to do damage. On the other hand, where game is preserved, and stoats, weasels, and cats are destroyed, I hardly know an estate where rabbits do not do damage, in spite of all efforts to keep them down.

There is a tendency in this district to limit owners or occupiers to certain means of destroying rabbits. This, I think, would be a mistake. Every man should be allowed to use any means in his power, on his own land, to destroy them; but should be compelled to keep them down. And, I think, a rabbit-proof fence should be a legal fence under the Fencing Act, either wire 3ft. high, 1½ mesh, or slabs not less than 4ft. in each case, let into the ground 6 inches.

G. Randall Johnson, Esq., Wellington.

I have, &c.,

JAMES STUCKEY.

APPENDIX B.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 26th September, 1884.

As I am obliged to return to-day, and as I ascertain that the time of your Committee will be fully occupied, I have written out the evidence I wish to have given, and trust that the same will be accepted, in lieu of my giving it in person.

The nature of my case is reported in the *Wairarapa Star* of the 22nd June, 1884. I was summoned by Inspector Drummond for driving fourteen sheep. The case was given in my favour, and I think it should have rested with the decision of the Court.

Inspector Drummond has appealed. I think it very hard that I should be subject to the annoyance, loss of time, and expense of defending another action.

It costs the Inspector nothing, while indirectly I find the money to prosecute myself.

It would be better for me to pay the fine he wishes to abstract from me, for I am not a wealthy man, and I cannot afford to follow the case into every Court at the whim of the Inspector. If the Inspectors had to pay their own costs they would not appeal.

I would draw your attention to another case of the same nature—Inspector Richardson *versus* E. Barber; the defendant's costs in this appeal was £40, the fine £10.

Inspectors do not carry out the instructions of the Act as regards "Conduct to owners." (See page 74.)

Feeling, now, that my case will receive consideration at your hands,

The Hon. Randall Johnson.

I have, &c.,

JOHN CROSS.

APPENDIX C.

AMENDMENTS proposed to be made in "The Sheep Act, 1878," suggested by a Committee of Sheep-owners in the Wairarapa North Subdivision.

Interpretation Clauses: Word "run" to be expunged. "Flock" to mean and include any sheep such as the owner shall be in the habit of having shepherded in one flock, or depasturing in one paddock or enclosure, and separated from other sheep by a sheep-proof fence or secure natural boundary. "Infected sheep," definition same as in Act of 1878, except subsection (4) of section 5 of interpretation clause. "Infected flock" to mean any flock in which there are, and have been within three months, any infected sheep.

Section 13, Act 1878, to be amended by the addition of words, "by the usual means in use by the owner or person in charge."

Section 20, Act 1878—Proposed Amendment: The Chief Inspector shall register a distinctive colour, with which all infected sheep shall be branded. If any person shall, without authority, use any such colour to brand sheep, he shall be liable to a penalty of _____.

Section 25, Act 1878—Proposed Amendment: Every owner of any infected sheep shall, as soon as practicable, cause the same to be distinctly wool-branded on the back with the colour registered by the Chief Inspector for that purpose, and such colour shall from time to time be renewed as occasion shall require, so that the same shall be distinctly recognizable.

New Clause suggested: When any owner of sheep shall have several flocks depasturing upon any run or upon any adjoining run, and only one of such flocks is infected, he shall have power to call upon the Inspector to examine any other flock or flocks in his possession for the purpose of obtaining a permit for removal of such sheep; and, if upon such inspection, no infection shall be found in the other flock or flocks, the Inspector shall grant such permit: Provided, however, it shall be lawful for the Inspector, if he sees fit, to require the owner to dip all sheep he desires to remove.

Section 29—Amendment: When any owner shall have several flocks of sheep depasturing upon any run, and one of such flocks shall become infected, it shall not be lawful for such owner to remove any sheep from any such flock for a period of three calendar months after he shall have obtained a clean certificate for such flock, unless with the written permission of the Inspector upon each occasion of removal, and unless such sheep shall be dipped under the supervision and to the satisfaction of an Inspector.

Section 32—Proposed Amendment: No clean certificate shall be given to the owner of any infected flock until the Inspector shall have satisfied himself, by examination, or by the declaration of the owner, that the adjacent flock or flocks on his run are free from disease.

New Clause—Certificate: When the owner of an infected flock shall have complied with the provisions of the Act, and the Inspector shall have found the sheep free from disease at the end of three months after the last dipping, the Inspector shall forthwith give such owner a clean certificate. N.B.—No power given under the Act of 1878 to compel the issue of certificate.

New Clause—Simultaneous Dipping: The Inspector shall have power to require owners of all or any infected flocks in any subdivision to dip their sheep twice simultaneously at any reasonable time of the year, and also to require the owners of sheep adjoining infected flocks to dip once simultaneously with the owners of infected flocks any sheep depasturing in paddocks adjoining or near such infected flocks.

Section 46, present Act—Proposed Amendment: Word “shall” to be substituted in lieu of “may,” and the word “reasonable” in lieu of “sufficient.”

Section 52, present Act—Proposed Amendment: That every owner of sheep in an infected district shall maintain, to the satisfaction and in the opinion of the Inspector, a sufficient dip, with all necessary appliances and material for dipping his sheep once, and in default shall be liable to a penalty. That, in case of subdivisions infected at the time of passing of this amendment, this section shall be in force at the end of one month after the passing thereof, and, in case of subdivisions proclaimed infected hereafter, at the end of one month after the date of such Proclamation.

Section 67, present Act—Fees, Fines, &c.: All fines, &c., to be paid into an account to be called “the Sheep Fund,” and in the case of “fines” to be applied in districts where levied in the eradication of scab.

APPENDIX D.

Sir,—

Hawea, Otago, 4th October, 1884.

I am directed by the Progress Committee of this district, in answer to the letter of the Colonial Secretary of the 9th ultimo, to forward you the following information as to the administration of the Rabbit Act in this district:—

When tenders were first called for the extermination of rabbits on the Hawea Hundred, about fifteen months ago, the tender of L. McLean, at £15 per 1,000 acres, was accepted, although C. Dalton tendered at £8 per 1,000 acres. Tenders were again called nine months ago, when L. McLean's tender, at £20 per 1,000 acres, for twelve months, was again accepted; although T. Fox's tender was only £11 for the same work. There were, besides, several other tenders at a much lower rate than the accepted one. The Inspector, on being questioned at a public meeting, referred his interrogator to the Colonial Secretary, who replied that the Inspector had been instructed in future to send all tenders to his office for consideration. The inference is that previous tenders had not been sent.

I am further to inform the Committee that the settlers here are quite prepared to exterminate the rabbits on the hundred, free of expense to Government, if the depasturing fees could be applied to that purpose, as they are convinced that their rights of depasturing stock will be seriously imperilled if the present unsatisfactory manner of dealing with the rabbit question is to be continued.

I have, &c.,

MUNGO ALBION,

Hon. Secretary, Hawea Progress Committee.

The Chairman, Sheep and Rabbit Committee, Wellington.

