

15. *Mr. Dodson.*] Would it not be well to get some information as to the present state of the run: in whose name is it?—It stands in the name of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Company.

16. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have they offered to assist you?—They refuse to assist me. They say that they would do anything I liked to ask them if I would only cancel the lease; but I have no power to cancel the lease. I have laid an information against them under the 27th section of the Act and another under section 2 of the amended Act of 1888 for not taking efficient steps to clean their sheep. They have not done anything. I want to get possession of the run under the 33rd section if I can. If I once got possession I would soon clean it.

17. In October, you say, the men found wild and scabby sheep, and in November more wild and scabby sheep, which they killed?—Yes.

18. Then they went to Manuka Island, where they found ten?—Yes; seven with the Birch Hill mark, and five of the seven scabby. The country was scoured the last autumn before, and there was supposed to be no sheep on it. These were sheep that came down after the first fall of snow in June.

19. Then the men were sent to Tophouse?—Where there were a few wild sheep, but none scabby.

20. Then, having returned to the Red Hills?—Several sheep were killed, but no scabby ones.

21. Then to Mount Patriarch, and after scouring that country for about three weeks, they found five sheep with the Birch Hill ear-mark?—And the scab-brand (S) for infected sheep. These were shorn about fourteen months.

22. These were killed on the 27th February?—The 27th February the last scabby sheep was killed.

23. Then on the 11th March you discharged twelve of the fifteen men?—Yes.

24. Why so?—They could not find any more wild sheep: there were no more about there. The ganger told me it was quite useless to keep the men on there, as there were no more to be found.

25. Then on the 31st March you discharged the remainder?—Yes.

26. They had not seen a single sheep in the interval?—They got two long-tailed lambs.

27. Were they clean or scabby?—Clean. Several of the sheep killed in October were shorn on Mount Patriarch Run only eight or nine months before.

28. You say you wished the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Company to put sheep on the run?—Yes; I wished them to stock the run, to see whether it was clean or not. They refused to have anything whatever to do with it unless I should guarantee them for whatever sheep returned short, or dip if scabby; in fact, they refused to assist me in any way.

29. On what ground?—On the ground that they had nothing to do with anything outside the fence, as they had abandoned the ground and sheep.

30. But the sheep, they had not abandoned them?—They said they had abandoned all outside the fences. I should have laid the information before, but was delayed owing to the Supreme Court sittings.

31. You supposed there were no wild sheep there?—Not on that block: on Bell's, the North Bank Block; there are wild sheep there, and have been for thirty years, and they are not fenced.

32. Who does that belong to?—Bell Brothers.

33. *Hon. Mr. Walker.*] Any scab in those sheep?—No; they have no scab on that run; these last thirteen years they have held a clean certificate.

34. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You say the hearing of the information is adjourned to the 2nd September, owing to this dispute about ownership?—Yes.

35. *Mr. Lance.*] You say this last scabby sheep was killed towards the end of February?—Yes.

36. I see by your letter, which is dated the 6th March, you say the number of sheep killed was 1,250; no scabby sheep were killed since November last. I am informed that five Birch Hill marked sheep were killed?—On the 27th February two out of the five were scabby.

37. Long-tailed sheep?—No; sheep that were shorn and S-branded about fourteen months before.

38. After you discharged twelve men, you kept on three to the end of the month. Of course, our great object is to know whether the country is permanently clean or not. This scouring, I suppose, must be a very expensive business. I want to know from you whether you had full power to spend what money you liked with that object in view, and whether the department aided you?—I was told that £1,000 had been set apart. I spent more than that—near £1,100. I was never denied any funds, but I never asked any. I spent what I thought necessary.

39. Would it not have been a good thing to have kept one man to potter about in the snow looking for sheep? We know that snow is a very useful agent in discovering the locality where wild sheep are likely to be: they are easily tracked in the snow. You are aware that our great object is to get the last sheep. Would it not be a great advantage if you were not limited as to funds?—I would have done that; but Mr. Crisp was continually threatening to take proceedings against me for trespass, or for the men driving sheep through the fences.

40. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Who is Mr. Crisp?—He is the manager of the Birch Hill Run for the Loan and Mercantile.

41. *Mr. Lawry.*] Did he make that threat in writing: was it by letter?—No; it was in conversation.

42. *Mr. Lance.*] But would that have been a good plan which I suggest?—Yes; I would have done that, but I did not know what proceedings he proposed to take against me.

43. *Mr. Dodson.*] And, if he had, what would have been the result?—I do not know. He threatened me for putting the men on the country; also for driving sheep through the fence.