

87. The Committee will assist you to make sure that this block of country is entirely clean. Until that is done there is no safety?—No; not until the block is stocked. If you put a flock of sheep on it you will soon find out whether there are scabby sheep there or not.

88. *Mr. Kerr.*] The Birch Hill country runs up alongside the Red Hill and Patriarch Runs. The country is bounded by the river for nearly twenty miles. There is nothing to prevent sheep crossing the river and getting over to the other side?—No; there is nothing to prevent them crossing at certain times.

89. When Mr. Crisp brought in his sheep, in order to get rid of any danger, did you not ask him to dip them?—Yes; and he refused.

90. *Mr. Dodson.*] Did he not dip them a month afterwards?—No; the Birch Hill sheep are not dipped to this day.

91. *Mr. Kerr.*] In mustering they lost four or five. The gate was close to the paddock that the Birch Hill sheep were in?—That was on Patriarch.

92. Close alongside the paddock?—Not far from it.

93. The Birch Hill sheep were shorn and branded the year before?—Yes; about fourteen or fifteen months before.

94. So that there was no mistake?—No.

95. After you had kept a great number of men there, it was not possible for a scabby sheep to be left there?—I do not think it was; scab was only found in a part of the run, in a corner of about six thousand acres.

96. Did Mr. Bayly tell Knyvett to give the certificate?—Mr. Hull was the Inspector in charge at the time. I think it was this way: Bayly gave instructions to Hull, and Hull gave instructions to Knyvett. Knyvett told me that he did not think it was right, but he had to do it. He told me he objected to it. But all that was before my time.

97. Was it six weeks afterwards that scabby sheep were found?—About two months; but all that was before my time. I cannot tell you about it; it was before I went there.

98. Have you any reason to think you would be interfered with as to the Birch Hill flock?—I have really no power. I am trying all I can to get power from the Magistrate to take possession under the 33rd section.

99. Have you put yourself in communication with Mr. Hanna?—When I speak to Mr. Hanna on the subject he says Crisp is manager; if I want anything done Crisp sends me to Hanna.

100. Mr. Hanna, in a letter which I have here, says he was anxious to work with you in every way?—He has not worked with me in any way; I do not care what Mr. Hanna says to the contrary. I have had more opposition from the Loan and Mercantile Company since I went to the district than I ever had before since I entered the department. I never before had such opposition shown; but they said if I would cancel the lease they would do anything I wanted done.

101. Mr. Hanna, in a letter of the 27th instant, says: "I need hardly assure you that the Loan and Mercantile Company are exceedingly anxious to work in harmony with the Government in their efforts to eradicate scab; and I am authorised and prepared to meet them in every possible way"?—He will not meet me in any way whatever.

102. Then, they have not corresponded to your advances?—I have tried them in every way, and I could do nothing with them. I have reported everything that was going on.

103. He says he is authorised and prepared to meet you in every possible way?—He has never told me that.

104. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Does Mr. Hanna say anything in his letter about the surrender of the run?—

105. *Mr. Kerr.*] Is it a fact that they took proceedings, or threatened to take proceedings, against you for going on the run?—They said the men drove the scabby sheep I mentioned there; and they threatened to take proceedings against me for that.

106. Are they not running cattle on the country?—There are cattle running on the country.

107. Is it not true that the manager of the Birch Hill flock said he would not dip on account of the expense of it?—Yes; owing to the expense.

108. *Mr. Dodson.*] How many sheep are there in the Birch Hill flock?—About 29,000; but, then, there are 2,500 on the Patriarch, 2,000 at Tophouse, and 25,000 on Birch Hill proper.

109. Something over 30,000 altogether?—No; about 29,000.

110. *Mr. Lance.*] There is a great mass of correspondence here, from which it appears that the company have not a leg to stand on in regard to this matter. Here is a letter of the 7th June, in which they say they are willing to do everything, but they are informed that the back-country of Patriarch is infested with wild sheep. The Inspector answers, pointing out that in any circumstances compliance with the Act for the purpose of cleaning the district rested with them. Then it is said the department are firm. Then the company say they are willing to do everything, but they do not do it. Is that the position?—Yes, that is the position. They will not do a single thing. Crisp told me I was very hard in working the Act. I said I was surprised when I heard that, because I was generally told I was lenient. The fact is I have never had any trouble until I went up there.

Rabbits.

111. Now, witness, can you tell us something about rabbits?—The district is under a Rabbit Board. I never had the working of the Rabbit Act there: it is all under the Rabbit Board. They are introducing the natural enemy. They say they wish to give the work of the Board a fair trial. When I was there four years ago rabbits were spread over a good bit of the country. It appears that they are more spread about now than then.

112. Are they not a good deal worse?—Yes; a good deal. I do not know very much about it. There were a few in the Awatere. They are now right up the valley. There were a few in the Wairau, but they are now spread right up.