

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.