

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.