

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 Tarndale 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