

778. Can you tell me how many runs are scabby? You know your neighbours, I suppose?—I have only three clean neighbours, Mr. Wood, Mr. Bullen, and Cloudy Ranges. If the runs are the high country between my Clarence Runs and Messrs. Wood's, Collins's, Hughes's, and Waipapa, they are scabby.

779. Do you know your neighbour, Mr. Low?—He is a good way off, twenty or thirty miles.

780. Is not his high country?—It is not such country as where I am. It may be higher from the sea, but when you come to measure from the base it is not so steep; it is much more easily mustered.

781. You have been to Acheron Run?—Yes.

782. What are the hills like?—They are not so steep or difficult to muster as a great part of mine.

783. You say they are so steep that the shingle comes down?—Yes; in some places. They are hills, but mine are mountains. They are almost as nothing to some of these mountains.

784. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Were any steps taken against you?—Yes, since I have left, but not while I was there.

785. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] How many fines were paid?—None.

786. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Were you ever fined?—I never was, but Gibson was.

787. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] When did Gibson take possession?—In August, 1881.

788. Has he paid any fines?—Not that I am aware of; but he is still fencing. I am as much in for it as he is.

789. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Was not the payment conditional: the money being given back to clean his sheep with?—I understood it was this way: that, if he gave satisfaction that nothing more could be done than what he is doing, the fine was not to be inflicted.

790. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] It appears to me that what he has given is simply a promissory note: if he does not give satisfaction he will have to pay it?—I wish to enter my protest against it. The Act itself I look upon as most unjust.

791. *Hon. the Chairman.*] In what way?—On the ground that we are treated as criminals before we have done anything. You must not forget that Gibson and I were in the same boat. Those other men have a better country to clean, and they got clean. Till they got clean it was all smooth. When they got clean they were most earnest to damage others, knowing that they must eventually ruin those others. I think they are more desirous of pressing matters in order to get the country than to get rid of scab.

792. You have no right to make imputations of that sort?—There is a certain road by which Gibson can get his fencing and dipping materials. It has already cost Mr. Gibson some £200. It goes through, for a short distance, leasehold land taken up by Mr. Bullen. At the same time that Mr. Bullen is crying out for scab to be cleaned, he is doing all he can to prevent the use of this track. This fact would show that the one point of getting rid of scab is not the only one.

793. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] You complain that they broke their agreement to clean, but they cleaned their sheep in the interval?—There was no agreement.

794. You stated as a fact that it was so?—There was no agreement.

*Hon. the Chairman:* I think it was this way: that at the first commencement, when all the runs were scabby, there was an understanding that it was possible to get their sheep clean, and therefore they did not take such measures as would actually eradicate scab. It was a tacit understanding.

795. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] They broke faith but cleaned their sheep?—I said nothing about faith: it was hope that was broken.

796. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You say that most of the runholders have clean certificates, having cleaned their flocks, and that Mr. Ingles's and Mr. Gibson's are the only runs upon which scab is kept up?—I do not know whether the Clarence is cleaned: all that range is scabby. I wish to state that Mr. Wood's is clean within a certain fence. There is a portion of country outside where the sheep have the Swyncombe ear-mark, but Mr. Wood does not consider these belong to him. These sheep, however, have the same ear-mark; they are on land which is leased by him. This is wild mountain-top.

797. In fact, he has taken steps to fence off this wild country that he may clean his own flocks?—He has done that.

798. Suppose the same course were adopted with regard to Mr. Gibson's run, would that not give him the opportunity to get rid of scab?—Yes; it is being done as fast as it can be done; but even then we should not be certain, suppose the fencing completed. We are extremely anxious to fence this country, but it cannot be done immediately.

799. Why not?—It will take some time to get the material. There are ten miles of fencing coming from England. We are now proceeding at an expenditure of some thousand pounds. Then, there is a piece of country lying between these two places—between Wood's and my run—mountain-tops and so on. Two years ago we applied to Mr. Bayly, and he said that the Government ought to help. The Government said, "These are your sheep in that country," but Mr. Wood cuts off a certain lot. He lets his sheep go, and therefore Gibson would have to clean the whole lot.

800. Would not Mr. Wood be willing to join with others to get rid of them?—I think he would, from what I know of Mr. Wood. I know he was killing all he could. It seems to me that would be the only proper course to adopt—to fence off. Until clean he could not muster; then to join with others in killing.

801. Do you think that these sheep belonged to the runholders in the first instance?—Yes.

802. Do you think they have a claim on the Government to clear them out?—Perhaps not; but no one person should be obliged to clear them.

803. Do you not think it is your duty to join the other runholders in killing them?—Yes; but it cannot be done in a minute. While we are doing that, an attempt is being made to come down with a heavy fine, which takes the breath out of our bodies.