

1144. In fact, it gave the department power to step in and clean a man's flock at his expense?—We have that power under this Act, but it is quite unworkable.

1145. But it would be desirable in such a case that the clause should be made more workable?—Really it is hard to think that we should ever have to take such an extreme step as doing the particular things necessary to clean a man's run. In the cases of Gibson and Ingles the first thing I should have to do would be to slaughter one-fourth of their sheep, which I doubt if we should have power to do. All these scabby runs are fully stocked, and it gives no room to work the sheep.

1146. Do you think that the eradication of scab in New Zealand would be facilitated by having a Chief Inspector in each Island?—I should think so from my experience. I think that it is almost impossible for one man to take charge of the whole of New Zealand both as regards sheep and rabbits.

1147. Then, do you think it is advisable that the two Acts should be worked by the same Inspectors?—I think decidedly that the Sheep Inspectors are the best men to undertake the administration of the Rabbit Act. They have a knowledge of the country and of the people.

1148. *Mr. Lance.*] You have worked this Sheep Act for many years and have had great experience of it. The object of this inquiry is to stamp scab out of the country. Can you suggest any alterations in the Act with that view?—I have thought the matter over very much, and my opinion of the Act is that is quite good enough if carried out strictly as far as scab is concerned. I think there are some amendments advisable to deal with such matters as sheep travelling in infected districts: I should like to see some discretionary power given to the Chief Inspectors. The word "negligently" should be struck out of the 45th clause. I consider that it is absolutely necessary that the owner of infected sheep should be made to keep those sheep within his boundary.

1149. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Absolutely?—Absolutely. If a sheep is found outside his boundaries there should be a heavy penalty. That would go a great deal towards cleaning the country.

1150. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Let me refer you to the subsection in section 62: "No abandonment of any such prosecution by any occupier, and no compromise made by any person, shall affect the Inspector's power or duty to prosecute for and recover such fine or penalty." What is the construction put upon that?—It seems to me that, no matter what any private person may do, it is absolutely imperative on the Inspector to take proceedings in all cases of breaches of the Act.

1151. Would not that apply to cases such as I put in reference to Mr. Gibson, both as regards his rams and as regards the remission of the fine?—Well, being only an individual Inspector, I have nothing to do with the recovery of the fine beyond obtaining a conviction and reporting the matter to the Government.

1152. You say it is their duty, not the duty of the Inspector, to recover a fine?—These matters are left in the hands of the head of the department, I presume. I have nothing to do with the recovery of penalties.

1153. Have you ever had any communication from the head of the department upon that subject?—No; none whatever.

1154. You know Hopefield Run?—Yes.

1155. There was a case there I think some time since—a notice to yard, and it was not insisted upon, and scab spread: was that before your time?—That was before my time, I think, but it is impossible to carry out that yarding section in such a country. It would require such an enormous amount of fencing that it would cost more to fence it than the country is worth.

1156. What I want to get at is this: Some owners of sheep have been pressed to comply with the conditions of the Act strictly; ought it not to be equally applied to others, or should some be exempt whilst others are pressed?—Well, I suppose we should have to leave that to the judgment of the Bench when a case is brought before them. In all these cases wherever there are infected sheep the owner should be served with an order to yard them for the protection of clean runs. I have always had this notice issued. In some cases it has been strictly carried out, in others it has been impossible to do so.

1157. Can you state whether the fact of New Zealand being infected with scab interferes with the export of stock to Australia?—I should say it does very materially, from what I have heard. I have heard several people say that there is a very large demand for store sheep in Sydney. That we should have a surplus to export there is no doubt.

1158. Would the prices ruling in Australia be sufficient to encourage an export?—Quite so; the prices that I was given to understand were ruling—I have not seen the papers myself—but I was told that something like 15s. could be obtained for merino ewes, that can be bought for 6s. or 7s. in Canterbury.

1159. Then, it is very desirable that we should get rid of scab?—Very desirable indeed.

1160. There is one other question. Something was mentioned regarding a flock in the Awatere District having obtained a clean certificate, and very soon after—within a week or so—scab having broken out; do you remember the circumstances?—No; it was outside my district; I do not know exactly what run was alluded to.

1161. Molesworth, I think, was alluded to?—I know none of the actual circumstances beyond what I brought out myself in examining Molesworth witnesses shortly after the outbreak of scab. I had to take proceedings against Willis and Fuhrmann for allowing their sheep to stray on Mr. Low's country and on the Tarndale Run. I laid an information in both cases and obtained convictions, and in the evidence I elicited the fact that there was actually scab upon the run.