

1164. You have nothing to suggest with regard to amendments in the Act; you are satisfied with it?—I am satisfied with it, with the two or three exceptions I have mentioned. There is one other thing I have forgotten: the notice for mustering is rather too short; instead of twenty-four hours I think it ought to be extended to forty-eight hours. It gives a very short time for people in rough country.

1165. Have you ever heard of any complaint in your district of Inspectors breaking down fences and leaving gates open?—None whatever.

1166. Are you aware whether Inspectors in riding to visit runs take with them means of drawing staples so as to get through fences?—I have never heard of any complaint of that kind.

1167. *Mr. Walker.*] As regards giving notice, are you of opinion that notice should be required in all cases where sheep are got together for other than the purposes specified in the Act?—I think it should be for all cases, certainly. I think the Act is pretty complete on that point.

1168. *Mr. Lance.*] There is one case which has been mentioned in which a man put his sheep under a cliff and drafted out the scabby sheep before the Inspector had come?—Yes, that has been done.

1169. *Hon. the Chairman.*] That is a case you can hardly meet. A man might round up a thousand sheep and take out the scabby ones; he might constantly be doing that, but that would not be a mustering in the terms of the Act?—No.

1170. *Mr. Walker.*] I think that Mr. Bayly mentioned, in reference to that shearing reserve, that last season he incurred a great deal of risk from the fact of twenty or thirty sheep being left there for weeks. In spite of all he could do, the Sub-Inspector was not able to get Mr. Gibson to remove or destroy these sheep. There were lambs among them, and the risks were enormous?—That was before my time; but the same thing occurred this last June. I had four cases at the Magistrate's Court on the 30th August, at Kaikoura, against Mr. Gibson, for allowing sheep to stray from the reserve through the fence. They were very long cases, lasting from 10 in the morning to 7 in the evening. In the course of the evidence I elicited the fact that several other cases of allowing sheep to stray had occurred. We found there were five scabby sheep actually left on the reserve. An Inspector has no power, however, except to lay an information. He cannot destroy the sheep.

1171. *Hon. the Chairman.*] The reserve is fenced?—The part they use for shearing is fenced. Since this season they have fenced in a portion of the hill, so that the risk will not be nearly so great this season as hitherto.

1172. *Mr. Buchanan.*]—Has any such instance as this come under your notice: a penalty hanging over a flockowner upon the discovery of scab, and to escape that penalty the sheepowner dipping, so as to conceal and make it impossible for the Inspector to obtain a conviction?—He could not do so and escape the fine, because an Inspector cannot inspect sheep within three months of their having been dipped, and the time for laying the information would have expired before the three months lapsed.

1173. But take such a case as this: A sheepowner had been ordered to clean his sheep. Near the expiry of the time he found that he could not present clean sheep, and he was dipping them upon the Inspector coming to the station, after having ordered them to muster?—I should say there was something very wrong in the Inspector in such a case.

1174. What proceedings would you take under the Act?—It would all depend upon the Act. The order to clean stands good for six months. Three months after that we examine the sheep for a certificate. Supposing I give you an order to clean on the 1st January, you could not dip your sheep after the 1st July, because you would be exceeding the six months. Supposing you dip your sheep on the 1st August, I should come to your station and examine your sheep on the 1st October. If I found they had been dipped within three months previously I should lay an information against you.

1175. For what?—For being the owner of infected sheep. Under the 23rd clause all sheep are infected that do not hold a clean certificate.

1176. Would you hold that, although no scab is perceptible owing to this dipping having taken place, my sheep were nevertheless infected?—Certainly. I should turn to the interpretation clause in the Act, which states that all the sheep which have been infected shall be deemed infected until a clean certificate shall have been granted for the same.

1177. The interpretation clause defines "Inspector" to mean "any Chief Inspector or any Inspector of sheep who shall be appointed under this Act." Now, you are an Inspector under the interpretation clause?—Yes; I am an Inspector.

1178. The Act says that "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 should you say to the application of that to such a case as Mr. Gibson's?—I suppose, reading it as you have done, that it is my duty to recover the penalties. It has, however, always been the work of the Government to recover them. I have always taken it that when I have obtained my conviction I should go out of Court, and that I have done with it. I report the matter to the Government by telegraph immediately I obtain a conviction; that is the last I have to do with it.

1179. There is another question I wish to ask. You have said that in some cases you are unable to get instructions from the Chief Inspector for a month?—Yes; when he has been away from Wellington. Of course he has to travel.

1180. I can hardly understand how that could be, if your telegrams addressed to Wellington were forwarded to the Chief Inspector at his last telegraphic address?—Yes, with regard to telegrams one might communicate with him; but there are often matters which one has to write and report on. It is more of these I was thinking. There are some cases we cannot explain in a telegram.

1181. To refer again to the dipping: Within this infected district in the Wairarapa there has been scab for between thirty and forty years. There has never been a Government dip, and any