

dipping that may have been ordered—as you ordered it at the Waiau—is always done on the station, there being no other dip?—I can only say that that is illegal. On the removal of sheep from an infected district to a clean one the Act says, “It shall not be lawful for such sheep to be driven, depastured, or suffered to stray to or at a greater distance within the said clean district than three miles from the part of the boundary of the said district at which such sheep are introduced.” They cannot travel more than three miles from the gazetted crossing without being dipped.

1182. But they are dipped at the station?—Are these stations within three miles of the boundary?

1183. That cannot possibly be in the case of all?—Then, that is in contravention of the 43rd section, which is perfectly clear. I in no case allow sheep to travel more than three miles without being dipped.

1184. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You saw the cases reported the other day of sheep being sent from Picton into Nelson?—Yes.

1185. You noticed in the report of that case that the sheep were not dipped?—I think they had got a considerable distance—twelve miles, or something of that sort, and even then they were allowed to come in without being dipped at all. That was against the law?—Perhaps it would not be so, because they were coming from an infected into an infected district.

1186. Is Nelson infected?—Yes.

1187. *Mr. Buchanan.*] I think you said there were only two scabby flocks in the Kaikoura District?—There are three actually scabby flocks.

1188. What is the number of sheep?—About sixty thousand. There are more on the infected list, but they will be off in another six weeks or so.

1189. I have previously stated that the number of sheep in the infected district is over three hundred thousand?—That is in the Amuri you are referring to?

1190. Yes. How many, roughly, would the surplus sheep—that is, those to be disposed of out of that number—amount to within the twelve months?—Of course that is rather difficult to say. I should say from 15 to 20 per cent. would be surplus stock in the Amuri. It is a very good country; the lambing is very good, and it produces a great deal of surplus stock.

1191. Owing to have to dip, what would be the depreciation on this 20 per cent. per head?—Well, I should say, at the very least, 1s. per head over the cost of dipping. I should say it would not be over stating it if I said 2s. per head, including the cost of dipping and depreciation.

1192. So that, practically, that number of sheep is each year subject to a fine of 2s. per head on account of these fifty or sixty thousand surplus sheep?—Yes.

1193. *Mr. Walker.*] Talking of disease generally—foot-rot, for instance—do you think the department can do anything, or that the Act might be amended, so as to keep that down?—I do not think so. I have thought the matter over very carefully, we have had such a great deal of foot-rot in Canterbury this season. I do not see any way to legislate in the matter. The great difficulty is not so much to clean the sheep as to clean the ground.

1194. I dare say you are aware that this season many cases of foot-rot have been communicated by public sale-yards: could not some precautions be enforced to disinfect these sale-yards?—Yes; of course it would be a matter for consideration. I dare say they could be disinfected in some way or other. They have been the means of spreading the foot-rot over the Canterbury District.

1195. Our yards at Ashburton have been?—Yes, and so have the Addington and Rangiora yards also been the cause of spreading it. In fact, I am quite sure the public roads cause the disease to spread. There is no doubt that the matter which exudes from the diseased foot, if it comes into contact with another hoof, might cause the sheep to take the disease, supposing it has been on wet paddocks and got the foot softened. If the hoof is hard and sound I do not think it would take it. I do not see how you are to meet these cases by legislation.

1196. Do you not think, if you took merino sheep off the hills and put them into a paddock of English grass, that, although there might never have been any foot-rot there before, yet within a short time they would develop foot-rot?—Not necessarily; experience shows rather the reverse. At Mr. Lance's, for instance, the paddock in front of the house has been stocked for years and years, and is just the kind of ground for foot-rot, it being soft oozy soil, yet there has never been any cases there.

1197. Does not the hoof grow very long?—Yes; but not in all cases. In many cases, of course, the hoof grows long, curves round and encloses decomposing vegetable matter. In other cases the sheep gets the disease although the hoof is short.

1198. Are you not of opinion that foot-rot is a greater and more serious scourge than scab?—Most undoubtedly.

Mr. HURSE, re-examined.

1199. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I think, Mr. Hurse, you wish to add something to your evidence?—I wish to add this: That scab in the Colony of New Zealand debarb the neighbouring colonies from purchasing surplus stock here at far enhanced values to those now ruling here. I consider this is a matter of colonial importance. It would not only be several thousands of pounds in the pockets of the sheepowners, but it would also be of great benefit to the public at large, because the money would be distributed here, and each one would get the benefit. When scab is in the colony we can not only not send store sheep away, but we are debarred from sending fat ones also.

1200. Have you, from the inquiries you have made, the means of knowing as to the quantity that could be taken by Australia?—I think the quantity would be almost unlimited, owing to the severe losses occasioned during the last two seasons in New South Wales and Queensland. I have made it my business to inquire into the matter, and I know that several shillings per head would accrue to sheepowners here if they were not debarred, on account of scab, from exporting.

1201. Scab would have to be stamped out of New Zealand for that purpose?—Yes; it would not matter if nine-tenths of New Zealand were clean, one case of scab would debar the colony from exporting.