

1275. In that case he must not keep them there?—Then, where will he take them to?

1276. You have not enforced the Act according to this meaning of the term; in fact, you have dispensed with this clause: you simply interpreted the term "herding" as meaning that a man must keep his boundary?—In country where there are gullies and rocks it is impossible to keep sheep in sight.

1277. Were you not bound to give effect to the Act as you found it, and not your own judgment?—Most men must use their own judgment in certain cases. A man, with open country in paddocks, where he can see his sheep all day, is in a different position from the man in a rough country.

1278. Then, you have not given effect to the Act according to the interpretation provided by the Act itself; you merely looked to what you considered was best in your own opinion?—Yes.

1279. *Mr. Dodson.*] Disregarding the interpretation clause altogether?—I did not disregard it.

1280. You said it was with the Inspector to press for a penalty or not?—If the Court asked whether the Inspector pressed for a heavy fine, it was left to the Inspector.

1281. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] In what clause?—I do not think there is any clause.

1282. Did you consider it to be within your power to withdraw cases?—The department did not disapprove of my doing so.

1283. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Are you aware that under the 66th clause it is the duty of the Inspector to lay a fresh information at the end of every six months?—Yes.

1284. How can you reconcile it with your duty under the Act to withdraw in such a case?—I have not withdrawn. I always laid the information at the expiration of the time. But nine months are allowed to a sheepowner to clean his sheep.

1285. But you stated that in some cases you have withdrawn?—Yes, under other sections of the Act, such as not having materials for dipping. I have withdrawn cases of that sort.

1286. Where is your authority for that? Can you show it to me in the Act?—I used to use my own judgment.

1287. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you know whether, in carrying out the Act, there is any clause that, in your opinion, should be amended so as to make the Act work more efficiently?—Yes, in the branding clause; I would suggest that where a person has, say, forty thousand sheep, and he gets one portion of them infected, the brand should be placed on the diseased flock, and not compel him to brand the whole of his flocks.

1288. How would the others be branded?—With the ordinary station-brand.

1289. And with the ordinary colour, whatever that might be?—Yes; but have the infected brand on the diseased flock or flocks. In large runs they will have part of the run free of disease, which may lurk merely in a small corner. In many runs, the diseased and clean sheep need never be near to each other.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND, M.H.R., examined.

1290. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Can you give us information about the working of the Sheep Act in Auckland?—Yes.

1291. Auckland is an infected district, I believe?—Yes; at the same time I should state that there is no very large number of sheep there, and not a large number of them scabby.

1292. Could you inform the Committee of the names of the subdivisions in which there is scab?—There is scab, I think, in almost every district.

1293. I have a return here of the Auckland subdivisions?—I see that that paper represents all the districts in which scab exists. The sheep that are actually scabby are very few, and the flocks are very small, and kept within boundaries, so that they ought to be easily cleaned. In Mangare they have had scab for twenty years back; in fact, I think they have pretty well supplied scab to other places. But I wanted to talk to the Committee rather about imported sheep. An instance of the working of the Act came under my notice last year, when Mr. Bainbridge got his flock scabby. They were dipped. He was giving up his farm in two months. As a matter of fact he did not really know whether it was scab or not. He proposed to put them (the infected sheep) in a paddock at the other side of the road. He offered to take every possible precaution—even to covering the road with straw, and burning it afterwards, or carting them. But Lewis absolutely refused to let him remove the sheep. There were, I should say, about four hundred altogether. The Inspector would not allow Bainbridge to shift them. Bainbridge left his farm, but this matter cost him almost as much as the sheep were worth. He had no end of trouble and bother. If he could have put them as he intended upon the clean part of his farm, he would have got them clean. He could have got rid of scab altogether. This district of Mangare has never been quite free of scab for the last fifteen or twenty years. I dare say there are about ten thousand sheep in Mangare. That would be about all.

1294. Then, there is no reason why sheep should not be clean there?—We had an outbreak of scab on our farm a good many years ago. We cleaned them with the greatest ease, and got rid of it completely. It was then much more difficult to deal with than now, because there was not so much fencing as there is now.

1295. What reason can you assign for the state of things you mention: is it to be attributed to the Act itself, or the way in which the Act is carried out?—It is the way it is carried out; it is the hard-and-fast rule which will not allow people to get rid of scab themselves. Here was the case of a man proposing to shift his sheep for the sole purpose of getting them clean, and yet they would not allow him to do so. As to the scab, Mr. McLaughlin, who also lives near Mangare, took a piece of wool, and put two scab insects upon it, placing them in a glass tube. He kept them in the glass tube, which was sealed. After keeping it there for two years he examined it, and found the scab alive, and also another scab insect. What we complain of is, that the scab is not stamped out. We believe it would be easy to kill it everywhere. There appears to be a sort of feeling that the Inspectors do not want to work themselves out of a billet, and consequently that scab is not got rid of. Almost all of the people I have met with have some opinion of that kind.