

1545. Yet you have told the Committee that he has administered the Sheep Act contrary to the regulation which enjoins that he should cultivate good relations with the sheepowners?—The public opinion of the district at the present time is that he is not popular.

1546. Would you apply that to the greater part of the district or only to a small section of it?—I would apply it certainly to the Castlepoint portion. I do not know the feeling of the settlers around Masterton.

1547. You are in favour of certificates lapsing unless renewed periodically?—No; I did not say they should lapse altogether. That would perhaps be going too far. I said there should be a systematic round of inspection, and that the certificate should be renewed unless some exceptional outbreak of scab took place.

1548. Do you not recognize on the part of the Inspector his liability to be called on to visit particular flocks, or important cases in connection with the freezing ships, your answer seems somewhat inconsistent?—All I wished to say was that every precaution should be taken to see that there was no spread of scab, and that there should be a systematic round of inspection.

1549. Are you aware of the concealment of scab on the runs?—Yes.

1550. Did I not understand you to say that you deprecated the Inspector riding about the land: would that be necessary to detect scab?—If he thinks I am concealing scab he should compel me to muster.

1551. Then again you object to dogs?—I have found that they rush sheep through fences; that sheep will go through fences away from them; and the sheep go where you do not want them to go—across fences, creeks, rivers, &c.

1552. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I want to ask you with regard to the sheep in unoccupied country. You attribute one of the causes of scab to that. Can you say whether you think it possible to eradicate scab there?—I think so. I think if it could not be finally eradicated it could be checked. It is a matter that wants approaching very carefully by a competent man. I have had a considerable amount of experience with bush sheep, and have done a good deal with hunting bush sheep. In such a district the greatest care would be necessary, so that they did not hunt these wild sheep into the settlers' flocks. That is the first thing to guard against. The only way to guard against that, that I know of, is to keep a number of men on the boundary while the hunting is going on. The fencing should be kept in as good order as possible. There is another thing worth noticing. You would want competent men to do this particular kind of work. The Government might be asked to assist. The men to be employed should be men not only competent on account of their knowledge of sheep, but men prepared to rough it. It would be a rough job. They would have to camp out, and all that. My experience is this: that after wet weather these sheep come out into the more accessible approaches to dry themselves. Their fleeces are so heavy that they cannot run, and you could catch them without much difficulty.

1553. What would you do with them?—Kill them. I should be prepared to give a bonus of so much a head for them. I would not have men with dogs of all kinds. I would have them with a few good sheep-dogs. I do not think the men we have as Inspectors are very competent to do this kind of work. They have not the experience necessary. They are too used to horseback work.

1554. Would it be a safe plan to call for tenders to kill them?—If you do that you will have to go at haphazard. It would, I think, be more convenient to pay men a small salary with bonus. If you do not take some steps of this kind it will take a long time to be rid of these sheep. Of course you would make these men produce the skin and ears.

1555. How long do you think you might take to get rid of them in the way you suggest?—I think that six months of the summer, with six proper men, would be sufficient; but I have not been over this country myself.

1556. Do you not think that winter would be the best time?—No, I cannot say that it would; because it is characteristic of wild sheep to go farther into the bush, and besides you would lose so much time in winter; the days are short: in summer you would have a long day; it would be better to take it in the summer. You might perhaps start after the autumn shearing.

WEDNESDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. EDWIN MEREDITH, Landaff, examined.

1557. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are a runholder in the Wairarapa?—Yes.

1558. Is your run infected?—No.

1559. Has it been so lately?—I received a certificate in February last.

1560. Had it been long infected before?—No; a single sheep was found diseased, upon which I gave immediate notice. As the sheep were dipped immediately, in a few days, or in perhaps less time, the infection was thoroughly eradicated.

1561. The Committee are anxious to get information as to the working of the Act in your district; perhaps you would state to the Committee whether you think it works satisfactorily?—I do not think it works satisfactorily at all. I have not come here on account of any special grievance, but to call in question the administration of the Act in my neighbourhood. I received private information that my family were to be persecuted. I have taken note of all transactions within the last twelve months which I think have led up to what I was warned would come about.

*Hon. the Chairman:* The Committee is here simply to get information as to the working of the Act.

*Hon. Mr. Robinson:* To find out whether it has been fairly administered: whether pressure has been brought to bear upon one, and favour shown to another. There has been evidence given which points to persons having been differently treated.

1562. *Hon. the Chairman.*] We should like to know whether the Act is put in force impartially.