

1772. You can catch them easily?—Yes; I know a shed where two ferrets were poisoned.

1773. Apparently, then, there is no difficulty in keeping down the number of ferrets if they should commence to kill?—I cannot speak from experience.

1774. You say it is not difficult to catch them?—No, it is not.

1775. Were those you have seen very savage and fierce?—No, they were not.

1776. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do you know the polecat: will they kill lambs?—The fougart they call it. I have only seen two in my life, and they were dead. But they are so scarce even in England that they have no chance to live. They are so fierce that every man's hand is against them. The stoat gets into a stone wall. If they can live in England, where every man's hand is against them, they will live here. I think the ferrets, if they should become numerous, will be harder to kill than you think for.

Mr. MARTIN, Jun., Wairarapa, examined.

1777. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you any evidence to give the Committee as to the working of the Sheep Act?—The difficulty with regard to sheep seems to be the Crown lands. I have not much knowledge on the subject, but I do know that to be one great difficulty in cleaning sheep.

1778. That is the great source from which flocks are scabbed?—Yes.

1779. Can you say, as to the working of the Sheep Act in your district, if it is carried out impartially and in a proper manner?—I think so.

1780. You have nothing to say against the administration of the Act: you think the Inspectors are good men and well appointed?—Yes.

1781. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Have you had scab in your flocks?—Yes.

1782. Did you find the Act was sufficiently carried out in your case, and that you were made to clean your sheep under the present Act?—Yes.

Mr. TULLY, examined.

1783. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I would ask you whether you have anything to tell the Committee about the Sheep Act; whether it is working satisfactorily?—As far as I know it is.

1784. Have you nothing further to say on the subject of sheep?—No.

WEDNESDAY, 10TH SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. W. BEETHAM, examined.

1785. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You live in the Wairarapa?—Yes; I am at present living at Masterton.

1786. Is that East Wairarapa?—Yes.

1787. Is that an infected district?—Every district is said to be an infected district in which there is scab. Yes; it is an infected district.

1788. Have you any scab on your run or in the immediate neighbourhood?—We have no scab in the immediate neighbourhood; but we lately purchased a property in which there were some scabby sheep—some wild sheep. We purchased the property of 5,000 acres in a dangerous part of a scabby district. The sheep, if they have not been killed, have gone back to the Government land. I would say that on this property we have no sheep.

1789. Then, the scab you speak of comes from sheep running on Government land previously?—Yes; we have no scabby sheep.

1790. Is there much Government land in the neighbourhood of that which you occupy?—There is a very large block; the very largest block in the North Island.

1791. Is that bush or open land?—It is nearly all bush. There is a little open land. There are scabby sheep there, I am sure.

1792. Have any attempts been made to get rid of them?—Attempts have been made, but I do not think they have been sufficient. There is a very good man up there; he does all he can; he is an exceptionally-good man. It is impossible that he could deal successfully with so large a difficulty.

1793. Who is the man you refer to?—Leverson: he owns some scabby sheep himself. There are only two men that do not hold a clean certificate in the district; he is one of them. He is not an Inspector, but he gets a bonus of 5s. a head, I think, for each sheep he kills. He does his best, but I think that sufficiently-energetic measures have not, as yet, been taken.

1794. Are those the only means that have been taken?—The only means.

1795. Who is the Sheep Inspector for the district?—Mr. John Drummond.

1796. Does he do his work efficiently?—I think it would be impossible to find a better man. He is energetic and painstaking.

1797. How do you think the Act works—satisfactorily or otherwise?—I think the Act should be amended. A fortnight ago a meeting of settlers was held in the Wairarapa. It was well attended, and a report of the meeting was published in the daily paper. The suggestions made there might be summed up in the recommendation to allow separate flocks, and that, within a certain radius of scab, men should be compelled to have an efficient dip, according to the size of their flocks; also always to have in hand sufficient material to dip their own flocks at a moment's notice. The cause of the spread of scab is the neglect of these precautions. Not having material on hand, the disease spreads to the surrounding district, when it might be prevented or checked.

1798. Is not that provided for by section 52 of the Act. But you refer to having the material ready at hand although a man's sheep were not scabby?—I think he ought to have it ready for immediate use. There are one or two instances of men having scabby sheep adjoining these Crown lands. These men had no dip on hand; they had no chance of getting a dip. A lime-and-sulphur dip could not be prepared within a month. I would refer to a small flock of, say, one