

905. How many did you run when you were receiving this rental?—About 3,000. There is a Government reserve of 700 acres, which I rent.

906. *Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*] That would be over 3s. a sheep?—I could not tell exactly.

907. *The Chairman.*] This lasted until October last?—Yes.

908. Who did you buy your sheep from when you stocked yourself?—From Mr. Orbell, who had to sell sheep then.

909. Did you buy the same sheep that were running there before?—Some of them; but I bought mostly younger sheep.

910. Whose brand was on them when you bought?—Mr. Orbell's own—a spur.

911. You rebranded them?—Yes; I put on a V.

912. Do you know the adjoining land of Silver Peak?—Yes.

913. You know the land which formerly belonged to Gellibrand and Co.?—Yes.

914. What is their brand?—They have different brands. They brand with a V, and use red, but they have several brands.

915. You have paid your instalments, I suppose?—Yes.

916. How much a half-year?—£277 5s. 7d.

917. This money you received from Mr. Orbell for running his sheep paid the whole of your instalments and left a balance to the good?—Yes, a little.

918. What did you do with your wool at last shearing?—Sold it to Mr. Orbell.

919. Before it was shorn, or after?—Before. I had no conveniences for shearing.

920. What did you get for it?—3s. 9d. per sheep, I think.

921. They would go about 4 lb.?—About that I suppose; a trifle over.

922. When you bought the land, had you money of your own?—Certainly. I should not have attempted to buy if I had not.

923. You were able to purchase without any assistance?—Yes. I had no assistance from any one; and but for the high price at which the land went I should have been able to stock it then. It went much above the upset, there being great competition for it.

924. Is it rocky land?—Yes, rough; but a very good grazing section.

925. *Mr. J. McKenzie.*] Have you the land fully stocked now?—No; it would carry more.

926. You have 2,250 sheep now?—Yes.

927. How many sheep ran on the land when Mr. Orbell had the grazing?—About 3,000, I think.

928. Then, if he gave you £575 a year, that would be about 4s. 6d. a sheep?—I do not think Mr. Orbell would give so much as that. There must have been more sheep.

929. Would you think 5s. a year too much for the grazing of a sheep?—Yes.

930. Well, are you not paying more yourself, considering the number of sheep you have and the amount of your yearly instalment?—No; I would not say that. I pay £554 a year. My wool-money alone last shearing came to £421; besides, I am acquiring the freehold of the land; it is not rent.

931. When did you fence the country?—Part of it was fenced almost when I bought it, part I fenced at once, and part is being fenced now.

932. You are not fenced against Borthwick?—No; we are running together. All down there do the same thing.

933. Do you keep a boundary between yourself and Borthwick?—No; we run in common.

934. During the time Orbell had the grazing of your land you acted as his manager?—Partly.

935. And Borthwick was employed as his shepherd at the same time?—Partly.

936. You have no arrangement with any person to convey this land to them at the end of your term?—Certainly not.

937. When did you send in a return of your sheep to the Sheep Department?—I cannot say exactly when.

938. What brand did you register as yours when you sent in that return?—It was like an anchor with a cross-piece.

939. That return was made in April last?—I do not know. It was sent to me and I filled it up and returned it.

940. *Mr. McMillan.*] Had you a written agreement with Orbell for the occupation of the land after you took it?—No; verbal.

941. It was simply understood that he was to give you £575 a year for the grazing of the land?—Yes. Finding, through the high price I had given for the land, that I was unable to stock it myself, I agreed with Mr. Orbell to let him have the grazing at that amount per annum, and he could run as many sheep as he liked.

942. What sort of homestead have you on your land?—A cottage.

943. Have you been most of your time residing on the land?—Yes, except when away on business, and when I got leave from the Land Board.

944. You have no yard or woolshed?—No; Mr. Orbell's is within a few hundred yards of my cottage.

945. *Mr. Stevens.*] Was any other land open for sale or lease in that locality, say, within twenty or thirty miles?—I think not.

946. Orbell could not have got 3,000 acres cheaper than by paying £500 a year?—I do not think he could have got it all.

947. When you were shearing, how did you and Borthwick know each other's sheep?—They were branded in different places.

948. You pay £554 a year instalment, and you received £575 from Mr. Orbell?—Yes.

949. In taking up the land, did you expect to make that amount of money off it?—No; I expected then to stock it myself.