

383. The number of infected sheep has increased in your district?—Yes.

384. Do you know any reason to induce you to think that is on account of the season?—I think it is owing to the mismanagement of that country.

385. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] I shall simply ask the witness what I think is apparent, whether he thinks that if the Sheep Act were rigorously administered it would clean the country?—I do think so.

386. That it is through the want of that rigorous administration of the Act that scab has not been stamped out?—

387. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Who is to blame for that?—I think the Inspectors are to blame.

388. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] You say that scabby sheep do pass from Gibson's shearing reserve to your clean run: did you complain to the Scab Inspector?—I gave immediate notice.

389. Could he have herded by day and yarded by night?—There were only a few stray sheep on this country. They could have been slaughtered.

390. They were neither herded by day nor yarded by night?—No; nothing of the kind.

391. He received orders to do so?—Yes; he continuously received orders.

392. Are you of opinion that the Sheep Inspector was omitting a part of his duty in not having ordered Gibson to herd and yard?—

*Hon. Mr. Williamson:* The witness said the Inspector did order, but that Gibson did not attend to it.

393. Did he fine Gibson for not obeying his orders?—There were three instances where sheep got out through the fence on to his neighbour's run. He was fined for these; the case proved against him was negligence.

394. Was it not the duty of the Sheep Inspector to muster the sheep himself?—I think so.

395. He failed to do so?—Yes; he failed to do so. There was also a case of boiling-down. Once my manager was coming down when he saw a boundary-shepherd, who was looking after the fence, and having a number of young dogs. He saw him with a mob of sheep; there was a deep gully between them. The man was bringing the mob of sheep towards the fence. He called to Mr. Gibson's man (Gibson was not there) and told him what he was doing. The man was breaking in his dogs with a mob of scabby sheep on the fence. We all know that a young dog may easily cut off a scabby sheep at any time, and rush him through a fence into a clean run. I know that when Mr. Passan was in the district he said he could not get support. He wanted to carry the Act into force, but they would not allow him.

396. *Mr. Walker.*] Who are they?—His superiors.

397. *Captain Russell.*] Does that mean the Head Inspector or the department?—The Head Inspector.

398. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Who is the Head Inspector?—Mr. Bayly.

399. *Mr. Walker.*] Between the two, the Act cannot be carried into force against all?—Their influence with the department causes the Act to be loosely administered.

400. Is that influence exercised with the department or with the Government?—With the Government.

401. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] How do you mean?—By their influence through the various channels.

402. *Captain Russell.*] Have you formed any opinion as to how long a time it will take to eradicate scab if the Act were rigorously enforced?—It depends upon how you go to work. I am satisfied that in some hands it could be done in eighteen months.

403. That would be under the most efficient system?—Yes.

404. *Hon. Mr. Campbell.*] Has not Mr. Ingles been fined?—He has been fined.

405. And the fine has been enforced?—I believe so.

406. Mr. Gibson also has been fined?—Yes, he has been fined.

407. What was done in this case: was the Act carried out?—The fine was remitted and a bond was taken. The Government took a bond from him that he should expend the money in fencing.

408. What is the general rule among owners?—The dip, whenever it is necessary. We dipped seven times in the year; but I was determined that I would not keep scabby sheep.

409. Do you reduce your flocks?—We had 15,000 on a piece of country, and we reduced them to 10,000, then 5,000. We have now 15,000.

410. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You say that the country might be cleaned in eighteen months if the proper steps were taken?—If all these wild sheep were cleared off, and the old sheep boiled down.

411. It is stated that the difficulty of getting rid of these sheep on no man's ground is very great: do you think that the district could be made clean in eighteen months?—No man's ground is the tops of the spurs. Sheep from the lower country work up there after the snow has gone off. Sometimes the sheep of the country get mixed with the others.

412. If the country is understocked, will these wild sheep come down to feed?—Yes; they will come down like the others. If the country is overstocked, sheep are bound to spread to their utmost limits.

413. Is there any further remark that you wish to make as to the working of the Sheep Act in your district?—I think it is a shame that people owning scabby flocks should be allowed to breed with them. I think the Act should have been brought into force last year. The ewes are still having lambs. A very great injury is done to the neighbourhood by the results of this neglect.

414. You think the Act has not been carried out in this respect?—No, it has not been carried out in this respect. One man is told that he must not breed; another is allowed to do so.

415. Are not all told the same?—All are told not to breed, but the rams are not taken out.

416. In fact, the Inspectors do not see that their orders are carried out?—No.

417. *Captain Russell.*] Is there a sufficient staff to carry out the Act?—There are, in fact, too many Inspectors.