

864. *Hon. the Chairman.*] How soon after writing to Mr. Bayly?—I think you have the letter there.

865. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do you know how many scabby flocks there are now in Kaikoura, and to whom they belong?—To Gibson, Ingles, and Reese. There are several “cockatoos” there with scabby flocks, but I do not know how many.

866. Do you know how long these sheep have been scabby?—I believe they have never been clean.

867. Was there ever a portion of the Highfield country, between Highfield proper and Mr. Ward’s country, kept free from sheep, so as to be a buffer?—They kept it as free as they could.

868. It was not stocked?—Not by Highfield.

869. How long was it kept without sheep?—For five years, to the best of my knowledge.

870. Was that to make the Highfield sheep secure?—They were afraid that, if they stocked it, the infection would get into Highfield, and extend into the whole Amuri. It was kept to be a buffer. It was mustered year by year. Before putting our sheep on the Cloudy Range, we gave two men £1 per head for any sheep they could get; they only got ten.

871. Do you know that any of those who were fined paid the fines?—Yes; Mr. Ingles paid a fine; Mr. Timine, I think, paid his fine.

872. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Did he pay any money for his Lyndon flock being scabby?—I do not think he ever paid it. He paid one small fine of 40s. for not giving notice of washing. He was fined £450, but he appealed to the Supreme Court. That fine was not paid, to my knowledge.

873. *Hon. the Chairman.*] It has been stated here in evidence that there was a muster of the Cloudy Range, and that, out of twenty-seven sheep that were got, three belonged to Mr. Gibson, and were clean, while the others belonged to Highfield, and were scabby?—To the best of my belief, we did not get any Highfield sheep at all. I think it was thirty-three; I do not think it was twenty-seven.

874. It has been stated that the reason why this portion of the Cloudy Range was unoccupied was in order to keep the Highfield sheep within the fences, that they could be thoroughly cleaned: do you confirm that statement?—The Highfield sheep were scabby in Mr. Caverhill’s time. For the purpose of cleaning they took sheep off that part of the run.

875. Was that the reason the Cloudy Range was unoccupied, and not from fear of Gibson?—No; they have been endeavouring to get their sheep off to keep it for a buffer. You will see a letter there. We wrote a letter, telling the exact circumstances.

876. *Mr. Lance.*] It has been stated that the owners of Highfield Run did not use that country on account of their fear of scab, but for the purpose of cleaning: is that true?—I do not think it is true: they simply were afraid to stock. Mr. Corbett, the Highfield manager, refused to stock, because he said the risk was too great. They kept the run separate from Highfield proper. Our grievance is that we have to spend a lot of money in fencing, &c.; that we cannot get our sheep into Canterbury without extra cost; that we have to maintain a lot of boundary-keepers; that we have to pay a lot of money, being heavily fined; and that our wool is depreciated in value: all because of these men being allowed to keep scab in the district.

Mr. R. S. HAWKINS, examined.

877. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You desire to give evidence on the subject of rabbits?—If the Committee wish for evidence on that subject.

878. But I should first ask whether you have any experience of the working of the Sheep Act?—I had the misfortune to be scabby once.

879. Is it as to the administration of the Act you would give evidence?—I hardly know yet as to what I am expected to give evidence on.

880. Is your land not scabby?—Not now.

881. Nor Boland’s?—It is clean now.

882. Was it clean when you took possession?—Yes.

883. Are any of your neighbours’ scabby?—I am not sure; one was scabby, but he has now a clean certificate. My run was scabbed from part of his land, which was open to Government bush.

884. What evidence have you to give as to the working of the Act?—That is a burning question. It is a very hard thing for me to say anything on that subject. I have studiously kept aloof from all questions concerning the administration of the Sheep Act of late. I took part in it at one time. There was a motion made by myself, at a public meeting which was held at Masterton, where the question of the Sheep Act was brought up. I moved that a committee be appointed, with a view to obtain amendments of the Act, and more effective administration.

885. Were you dissatisfied with the working of the Act?—We certainly were then.

886. In what respect?—We were satisfied that scab was being kept alive in the district, and we saw no probability of its being got rid of under the then administration of the Act. We felt that more energetic measures were necessary on the part of the sheep authorities.

887. Did the Inspectors take proper steps to compel the owners of scabby sheep to clean them?—That is a very difficult question to answer. My feeling on the subject was that we should not go into all the petty questions and accusations brought by one and another against the Inspectors. I went on the broad ground that the Whareama was not clean, and ought to be clean. That indicated to me that a change was necessary; that greater power and force ought to be brought to bear in the Whareama, so that the work might be done. The course I urged on the committee was this: I asked them not to go into accusations against the Inspectors, but simply that they should ask the Government to appoint a thoroughly-qualified person, who should have sole and absolute charge of that district, and that he should have power to engage what, in his judgment, was a sufficient number of men; with a view to clean the Government lands of scab; that he should be well paid, and we agreed in committee to suggest that he should have a bonus if he cleaned the district at the end of the year, and kept it clean, I think, for eighteen months. These were the resolutions which we came to unanimously. It was in consequence of that that certain action was taken, and