

think the Inspector's subordinates and the Inspector have been well supported by the chief office?—As to the subordinate Inspector in our district I have no reason to say that he is not now supported.

900. Because you are not scabbed now, but when you were scabbed you were then under that impression?—Yes; I had that impression even later, for my run was cleaned in 1882.

901. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you the impression that, if proper steps were taken, and the Act were put strictly in force, with the determination to eradicate scab, the country would be cleaned?—Most certainly; I am most clear on that subject.

902. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Have the informations been regularly laid by the Inspector against those who have infected sheep?—I cannot say whether the informations have been regularly laid.

903. According to the Act it is incumbent to lay information every six months, that is, a fresh information every six months?—I cannot say whether that has been done. I cannot answer that question.

904. *Mr. Lance.*] I should like to know whether this bush country you speak of as a large tract of country is the same as that land in respect to which Mr. Beetham gave evidence?—I have no doubt it is; but there are several different blocks of unoccupied land in that district.

905. Mr. Beetham told us that a person named Leverton was paid 5s. a head to kill sheep: do you think that that is sufficient?—That is a question which I would leave in the hands of the Inspector. If there were a large number of sheep it might be sufficient; if there were only some few it would not.

906. What do you think would be sufficient to get the last sheep?—The course the committee was asked to take was to request the Government to give Mr. Drummond as many men as he required to clear the whole of the district of wild sheep. I remember that Mr. William Beetham was to be one of the deputation. My observation to him was, "Let the Government understand what we mean: we mean that the district should be cleaned, and it is the duty of the Government to do it; that if it would take forty men to do it they must have the forty men. The injury done to the district and the colony is inestimably greater than the wages of forty men."

907. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Are you aware that dissatisfaction was expressed at Te Nui?—I am sorry to say that I did not read the whole report of the meeting. I skimmed through it. I did see there was some question raised as to maladministration, and one person wished to insert another word. I should have voted against the use of the word "maladministration." I do not know there is maladministration. My opinion is that Mr. Drummond is doing his work as well, as faithfully and justly, as any man could do it.

908. Are you of opinion that there is such a decrease of scab in the district as is indicated by the latest *Gazette* returns?—I am hardly a judge, but I think that one of the greatest nests of scab has been routed out by Messrs. Williams and Beetham, besides the active steps taken by the Inspector; and, as this was done several months ago, we may hope that the danger arising from the straying of sheep from thence has come to an end. That alone would diminish the risks of scab.

909. Would the settlers themselves assist in carrying out the Act?—It must be understood that a good deal would lie with the settlers themselves. I am not one of those who would lay all the blame in this matter on the Government. I think there is quite as much blame on the part of the settlers themselves.

Mr. J. HURSE, examined,

910. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What district do you come from, Mr. Hurse?—I come from Canterbury: I have been buying sheep for some years on the other side of the Waiau. They have to be dipped twice there from clean runs—from runs that have been clean from two to ten years—before entering Canterbury Sheep District.

911. Why?—Because the district north of the Waiau is proclaimed infected. Sheep have to come to the Waiau River, receive one dip there, then be quarantined for a week, and after receiving another dip they can go on. Of course they have very little or no feed. This reduces the value of the sheep at least 2s. a head. It matters not whether a clean certificate has been held for a month or for four or five years, the owners of the sheep are in exactly the same position with regard to dipping. Neither does it matter whether the sheep come from fifty or sixty miles beyond the dipping place. If they come there clean they have to be twice dipped, although previously passing through a clean country and going on to another country that is clean.

912. Do you think that a great disadvantage?—Yes; because there is no inducement to be clean: if a man holds a clean certificate for one year he is in the same position as the man who holds a clean certificate for five or ten years, and the man who holds a clean certificate for five or ten years is in the same position as one who holds one only for three months.

913. What is the cause of that?—The cause is that there are one or two runs scabby in their district; yet there are several stations which have held clean certificates for five or six years.

914. This comes of a district being called under the Act an infected district. It is declared to be so infected because one or two out of a great number of runs have lately been infected, although now all the runs are clean?—Yes; the runs are all clean. I may say that I would as soon as not take sheep without being dipped from runs that have held clean certificates for several years. I have brought the matter under the notice of the Inspector, saying that one dip on the station was quite sufficient. They should cross the river and not be quarantined or dipped.

915. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You would suggest that alteration?—Yes; the Inspector, under whose notice I brought the matter, said that he had no discretionary power.

916. Do you not think it would be better to dip at the quarantine-ground?—No. They leave their station with a clean certificate; they travel through a clean country before getting dipped at the quarantine-ground; then why not dip on the station? I see no risk. There is just as much risk at the quarantine-ground.