

Waipapa Run, is fencing within a mile or two across the same gullies. There are no gullies there that could not be fenced across.

979. Have you ever made a report to Mr. Ingles himself that you considered that portion of the run could not be cleaned?—No; certainly not.

980. Or that there was any too difficult to fence in?—Shortly before I took charge of the country Mr. Bayly sent two Inspectors to see if the country could not be fenced, and to report upon it. Mr. Ingles objected very much to their reports, and when I came in charge he asked me to see for myself and say what I would suggest. I went with Mr. Ingles, and drew up a scheme which he appeared to agree to at the time, and I reported to him accordingly. I have my letter-book here, with a copy of my report in it, if you wish to see it.

981. Will you give us the substance of it?—I have only written one letter to Mr. Ingles on the subject.

982. From the portion I read of Mr. Ingles's letter, it seemed that the report went to show that the land was such that it would be very difficult or impossible to make a good fence?—No. I objected to the scheme that the other Inspectors had drawn up, which was simply to fence in this Island, as it were, with fifteen miles of fencing, leaving thousands of acres of open and bush country full of scabby sheep. I said it would be almost impossible for Mr. Ingles to keep this small flock inside the fifteen miles of fencing clean unless he cleaned the whole bush at the same time. In my opinion, the first step to be taken was to fence in some large mustering-paddocks. At the time I am speaking of—in fact now—there is no fencing whatever on this portion of the country. I suggested, in the first place, that he should fence in some large mustering-paddocks, which would hold a considerable portion of his flock during the winter. This would have enabled him to start this season with quite two-thirds of his flock clean. I will read a portion of my report. I need not quote the whole of it. It is dated 27th October last: "Having seen sufficient of your country north of the Hapuka to enable me to determine what steps should, in my opinion, be taken by you in order to clean the country effectually, I wish to lay before you the conclusions I have arrived at, for your consideration, in the hope that, should you agree to adopt my suggestions, no time will be lost in the fencing, &c., being put in hand. In the first place, I may say that I do not think that it would be at all desirable to fence in the Buibui country alone, leaving out such a large extent of both open and bush country, which is more or less infested with wild sheep. I think it is extremely doubtful whether such an extent of fence—some fifteen miles—through such country, and with two flood-gates at the extreme end, would be maintained in sheep-proof condition through the winter. I think also that having this block fenced would probably have the effect of lulling you into a false sense of security, and that you would not, in consequence, follow up the killing-off the bush-sheep with the energy and persistency which the case undoubtedly demands. The result would be that each spring a fresh outbreak would almost inevitably occur. Having in view the large extent of bush with which your country is surrounded, I look upon it as absolutely necessary that the bush-country should be cleaned at the same time as the open, and I believe this can only be done by providing securely-fenced paddocks. On another ground also I disagree with the idea of your fencing in the Buibui country alone and cleaning the sheep within your fences. The Sheep Act provides that no certificate shall be granted until the whole of the sheep are cleaned. I therefore could not sanction the granting of a clean certificate until your bush-country included within the boundaries of your run is also free from disease. In my opinion this end can only be attained by fencing in a large mustering-paddock, a holding-paddock for rough sheep, &c., and probably some other fencing which would facilitate the working of and mustering the sheep." Then I go into the question of the cost of fencing, and I finish up: "With this amount of fencing, and with continuous mustering through the autumn with a really efficient gang of musterers, I am confident that the Buibui Run and surrounding bush could be so nearly cleaned this season that absolute certainty could be made of the whole block next year." That was my opinion at the time, and it is still, but nothing has been done, and twelve months have been lost.

983. What is the cost of that fencing?—That fencing would be under £600.

984. How much country would that enclose?—I do not know what would be the area enclosed, but I estimated it to carry two thousand sheep.

985. Does Mr. Ingles hold a clean certificate for any portion of his flock now?—Yes; that is another portion of my plan. Mr. Ingles, for the last twenty years, has been bringing these scabby sheep to what is called the Kincaid Flat, in front of Kaikoura, and shearing them. Then in autumn, when all the shearing is done, the paddock-sheep were dipped and practically cleaned until the next year. Not only that, but, by this system of bringing down scabby sheep, there is continually the risk of spreading scab on small farms in the vicinity of Kaikoura.

986. So you think that, by keeping these sheep down in the paddocks, there would be no risk of their giving scab to the sheep adjoining at the back?—Yes; I proposed it not only for their own benefit, but also to prevent the spread of scab in addition. I have given a clean certificate to the Kincaid portion, on condition of a wool-shed and dip being constructed on the banks of the Hapuka, where there are no other flocks.

987. Does the Act authorize your giving a certificate on that account?—I should say certainly, if the run is divided in that way. It is under a different name: Kincaid Farm, under Mr. A. W. Ingles, and the Buibui Run, under Mr. H. Ingles. The sheep, when they are shorn, will be under separate brands.

988. But they are not now under separate brands?—No; we left that till the shearing. They are now under the same brand, but, of course, they are some eight or nine miles apart. The flocks do not adjoin at all.

989. But they run up to the same fence?—There are some eight or nine miles of rough bush between the flat and them, with no sheep running between. They are practically eight miles apart.