

990. But there is no fence to prevent them from coming up?—Yes; there is the Kincaid fence.

991. There is only one fence to separate them?—Only one fence to separate them.

992. There is nothing to prevent the sheep, if they force their way through the bush, from getting up to that fence?—No; only they would have to go through these miles of very rough bush.

993. How do you know that portion of the runs have changed hands?—Partly by letters from the Messrs. Ingles to the effect that they would do this, and also from their sheep returns: they sent in separate sheep returns. We have given them notice to register a fresh brand for the Kincaid Farm.

994. In fact, you treat them now as two separate runs entirely?—Two separate runs entirely.

995. Is there a distinct shearing-shed?—Mr. Ingles promised to build a distinct shed for the Buibui flock.

996. There was none at the time?—Yes, a shed at Kincaid; but there is no new wool-shed erected yet. Mr. Ingles told me he was trying to buy property suitable—a saw-mill—but whether he has done so or not I do not know.

997. I think you said that no steps had been taken to clean the bush at the back?—None whatever.

998. There are none going on at the present time?—None. I sent an Inspector up about three weeks ago, and there was no work going on then.

999. Is the department taking steps to enforce the Act?—Yes.

1000. This portion of the run has been scabby for some time?—Yes; for the last twenty-two years.

1001. And informations are laid every six months?—Informations are laid every six months. I, unfortunately, lost the last case by neglecting to prove the previous conviction in Court. The case was dismissed; that was a month ago. I am laying a fresh information now.

1002. Do you consider that it would be very expensive to clean that bush?—No; I do not think it would be very expensive. Of course, as I say, it would necessitate a great deal of fencing, and there would have to be a great many sheep killed off, I think.

1003. Do you consider that that country is as difficult to clean as Tarndale, for instance?—It is more difficult, on account of the bush; Tarndale is chiefly open country.

1004. With regard to Mr. Gibson's run on the Clarence: that has been scabby for a long time?—Yes; I believe for the same time that Mr. Ingles's run has—for many years, at any rate.

1005. Do you know of any reason to prevent it being cleaned?—None whatever. If proper steps had been taken when this Act came into force on the 1st January, 1879, the run ought to have been easily cleaned within two years after that.

1006. Were proper steps taken at that time?—From what I have seen of the run, I should think that no steps—or very few steps—were taken.

1007. What steps would be necessary to clean that run now?—I should think the owner ought to erect another sixteen or twenty miles of fencing—which is being done now—and reduce the stock by one-fourth.

1008. Supposing that plan to be carried out, how long would it take to clean the run?—I would undertake to clean it this season.

1009. Before the winter?—Yes; before next winter.

1010. You are aware that there is a large quantity of unoccupied land at the top of the hills?—Yes.

1011. There are scabby sheep there?—Yes, I believe so; but I do not know it of my own knowledge.

1012. I want to know, when you make that statement as to the possibility of cleaning the run, if you are aware of the unoccupied country with the scabby sheep on it?—A large portion of that country would be fenced off.

1013. You say proceedings have been taken against Mr. Gibson?—Yes. I should like to explain, with regard to the Crown lands, that those sheep could not live on the Crown lands during the winter. It is only the highest tops that are Crown lands. During the summer, of course, they go backward and forward, and, as the snow goes off, they follow up the range. I should say all these sheep during the winter must be on Mr. Gibson's country, or in the bush on Mr. Ingles's side.

1014. You do not see any insuperable difficulty in getting rid of these?—None whatever. I have had a good deal of experience years ago in killing off wild sheep. I asked Mr. Gibson and his manager to keep their shepherds continually out following the sheep up and killing them on the hills during the winter.

1015. Mr. Gibson has been fined?—Mr. Gibson was fined £500. A conviction was obtained last September, but the fine, I believe, was remitted, or, at least, reduced to £5.

1016. You say that that was in September?—Yes; the 3rd September was the date. I had only just come in charge, and I had nothing to do with the case.

1017. Can you state by whom the fine was remitted?—I have no knowledge whatever of that.

1018. Since then have steps been taken against Mr. Gibson?—Mr. Gibson was again fined 4d. a head on 40,000 sheep on the 10th March. A conviction was obtained before Mr. Whiteford; the fine amounted to £666 13s. 4d.

1019. Has that fine been paid?—I believe not. I believe some bond was entered into in Wellington; I do not know under what circumstances.

1020. You do not know the terms of the bond?—I have seen the bond; I asked Mr. Bayly for a copy about a fortnight ago. It was simply a legal document binding Mr. Gibson to pay this amount within eighteen months I think it was, but I forget now. The reason I applied for it was I thought some conditions were attached as to the money being spent in fencing or something of that kind, but there were no such conditions in the bond I saw.