

lambling time. No sooner had I got notice to clean than I got information that I must put on rabbiters. I had to put on rabbiters. What was the consequence? the spread of scab.

1429. Your Inspectors under the Rabbit Act are the same as under the Sheep Act?—Yes.

1430. What was the state of your flock when you were ordered to put on rabbiters?—I knew that the sheep were infected, and I declared them to be infected. But these rabbiters I object to altogether. As to the Inspectors, they are in the habit of going about with dogs, catching sheep. I do not think there is anything in the Act to give them power to do that. The Act provides that we are to give them every facility for inspection; but I take that to mean that we are to bring our sheep into enclosures or yards, where the Inspectors can look at them. I do not think they should be allowed to go about with dogs, catching people's sheep; they might easily rush one on to a neighbour's ground.

1431. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] You say there is nothing in the Act to give the Inspectors power to catch sheep with dogs?—No; I think not; but they usurp that power. They come with all sorts of dogs, not only sheep-dogs, but with greyhounds—in fact, all sorts of dogs.

1432. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You say they come with greyhounds?—Yes; I suppose they are inspecting rabbits then. There is another point I do not understand. One Inspector at a time might be supposed to come at a time; but we find them hunting in couples.

1433. How many are there in your district?—Three for rabbits and scab combined.

1434. You say that two of them move together?—Yes; very often I have seen three together.

1435. What is the reason for that?—I do not know.

1436. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] With regard to Mr. Valance, did Mr. Drummond not know of his appointment?—I cannot say. I do not consider that Mr. Valance had any knowledge of scab. Our object is to get rid of scab. Three times I have been scabbed by neighbours. I have got rid of it. It is only by continual and expert dipping, and keeping shepherds, that we have been able to keep clean. While we have been inspected, there is little or no inspection in other parts of the district. It is upon broad grounds that I move in this matter. We do not know what may occur. I know that scab is at a low ebb in the district just now. I hope that scab may be soon eradicated, but I think we have no right to be put to the expense of some £10,000.

1437. Do you think that, if the Act is put in force strictly as regards the appointment of Inspectors, scab would be speedily eradicated?—I think it would be so with proper and efficient men; but, if the men appointed to work it are not discreet, it will do a great deal of harm and injury. This is an Act which might be made to ruin any man unless he had a bank behind him. I am afraid there is a tendency to work it in that way, that it will eradicate sheepowners.

1438. Why?—By the way they are going to work: I find they are going about like detectives, trying to trap people.

1439. Is it not their duty to find out scab?—Yes.

1440. And to use every means to find it out?—Yes; by the Act, which says they are to work cordially with the owners. There have been one or two cases in Court which, I think, reach almost to persecution.

1441. Which case do you mean?—In one case, the case of Mr. Cross, the Inspector assisted him to drive through the district. The Magistrate ruled that having assisted to drive did not answer the information. The party has had to appeal.

1442. What is the result?—It has not come forward yet, but there is a feeling throughout the district that the settlers are attempted to be jumped on by this Inspector.

1443. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you not think rather that the settlers are setting their backs up against the Inspectors?—I do not think so; I think the owners, or most of them, will be only too glad to see scab out of the district.

1444. Have you more than one flock on your run?—They will not allow more than one flock.

1445. Is scab confined to a certain portion of your run?—No; it is all over.

1446. Have you tried to sell sheep?—Portions of the run have been let since. Sheep have been worked off in that way.

1447. A lease was given for portions as separate runs?—Yes. They became clean three months after the certificate was given.

1448. Do you know the grounds on which the Inspector allows sheep to travel from an infected district: from the farm being divided into separate runs is it that a portion are clean?—I think the tendency of the Inspectors is not to allow separate flocks. This is a thing we strongly advocate.

1449. We have evidence that in a certain case a gentleman wanted to move his sheep to Wellington, and he was stopped by the Inspector at Ruamahunga. He was stopped on the ground that although he had a clean certificate, yet he did not hold the certificate from the Inspector of the district: do you know anything about that?—I have heard rumours. I would say that this matter of separate flocks was brought prominently under my notice when we became infected. My neighbours were infected. We got the infection from them on one small portion of the run. Mr. Sutton was in charge of the district. The flock that was infected—all of which we were prepared to kill, and did kill nearly all—but some eight or nine miles from us they had a number of fat wethers. They asked to remove these. The whole run was infected. These were separated by nine miles of country, and by about a dozen fairly-good fences. I think that the Act is inconsistent. I think, as I read the Act, that we ought to be allowed to have flocks. The Inspectors are most inconsistent in this respect. I think that a man, if he gets infection on one little corner of his run, should have the right to remove so long as the public will not be injured. Let all precautions such as dipping and so forth be taken, and let him then remove them. I think it would stimulate fencing, and stimulate people to keep their fences in good order, if they were allowed to keep separate flocks.

1450. *Mr. Lance.*] So that, if you put a flock on one side of the run that is clean, the other being infected but belonging to different people—one having a clean certificate, the other being infected, can the person having the clean certificate move?—No.