

1514. *Mr. Walker.*] I think you said that settlers were in favour of a stringent administration of the Act?—Yes, the majority; with discretion.

1515. You said the majority: I want to know whether there is a minority that is not in favour of it?—There may be a few careless men.

1516. Is there any public opinion in favour of careless administration?—I am not aware of it.

1517. Do you not think that scab has continued in the district because public opinion is not strong enough to keep it down?—I think there has been something of the kind; but I think there is a feeling now that scab and the rabbit-pest should be got under if possible.

1518. Is there no under feeling that would make the Inspectors careless?—No, I think not; there is no sympathy for those who would keep up scab. I know that in the case of Mr. Valance, which has been mentioned, several of the adjoining owners were interested. I am not sure that Mr. Maunsell did not direct that this clause should be put in force.

1519. Do you attribute scab to some certain centre of infection?—Yes; I think to a great extent that is so.

1520. And that these centres have always been distributing scab?—Yes; there are some that have had scab for many years, and have been considered the source of infection in the district. I think that before this last great outbreak there were several cases where this 33rd clause might have been enforced with good effect.

1521. *Mr. Lance.*] Did you ever know a case of the Inspector taking charge of a flock?—No; not in my experience.

1522. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You say that in your own case you would have got cleaned had it not been for your neighbours?—I said that I got the scab from my neighbours.

1523. Looking over the returns, I find in the Wairarapa, in 1879, second quarter, so many flocks declared scabby; third quarter, 1880, fourth quarter, 1881, second quarter, 1882, and third quarter of 1883, so many

1524. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What county is that in?—Wairarapa East.

1525. Do you attribute any damage to your sheep from these flocks?—I was infected on one occasion shortly after coming from that direction.

1526. When was that?—It is about nine years ago.

1527. Do you deprecate severe fining?—I do, to a certain extent.

1528. Was this continuing state of scab brought about by severe fining?—I do not think there were any severe fines imposed at that time. There was one, I believe, of £75 and another of £10.

1529. To what do you attribute the long continuance of scab?—That the owners do not take the proper steps to clean. If they took the proper steps to muster their flocks, they would soon have cleaned them.

1530. You cited a case—that of Mr. Bellis—in which you complained of the setting aside the clause under which the Inspector could have taken charge you say: was the Act carried out in other respects?—Yes; I think so.

1531. Then, you have no complaint with regard to this flock except that it should have been taken charge of by the Inspector?—I believe he (Bellis) had no dip when the scab broke out; the Act gives a month to get dipping materials. If he had a dip at the time, his sheep would not have got so bad.

1532. Was that the fault of the Act, or the administration of the Act?—I do not know whether there was action taken in that particular case.

1533. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You say that Mr. Drummond has not administrative talent: have you any specific cases to cite?—I do not know of any specific case. I have that impression. From a pretty long knowledge of him, I think he lacks tact. I think he is too plain; that he knows he has powers, and that he annoys people.

1534. I wish to put to you another question on that point: do you assert that Mr. Drummond, as a Sheep Inspector, is an unpopular man in the district?—I believe that at this time he is unpopular in the district.

1535. In the district?—Yes; I am sorry to say that I believe so.

1536. Do you know whether, under his rule, South Wairarapa has been made clean?—I think it was clean under his rule.

1537. That it became clean under his rule?—Yes.

1538. Do you know whether, under his supervision, the number of owners of scabby sheep has diminished rapidly during the last six or twelve months?—I am of opinion that there is less scab in the district, but I would not like to assert that it is clean.

1539. You mentioned it as desirable that an Inspector being appointed to a district should not have relations in that district?—Yes.

1540. Can you give us any cases where flocks of scabby sheep are owned by people related to the Inspector?—I do not know that I can at present, but there have been cases. Mr. Cameron's flock was infected while Mr. Drummond was Inspector.

1541. Is that the only case you cite?—There have been several other cases, but I do not know the names.

1542. Have the flocks you refer to been scabby of late years?—I cannot say.

1543. My reason for putting these questions is lest the Committee might think you had actual cases to point to before you made this statement as to relationship existing between the Inspector and the owners of flocks?—That is an interpretation which you are putting on my statement. But I do not think I intended to complain of any particular person. I said that it was undesirable, on broad grounds, that the Inspector should have relations in the district. That was the line I took.

1544. Are you aware of the recommendations made by a committee of sheepowners in Masterton: was there anything said as to the appointment of an Inspector?—I think the recommendation of that committee was that Mr. Drummond should be appointed for a special purpose. I think I myself was in favour of the resolution asking that he should be appointed.