

1886. Whenever you find scab in Auckland, are the flocks as a rule badly infected?—Very little; perhaps not more than three or four sheep.

1887. I suppose the sheep-farmers have not ordinary appliances to enable them to dip?—No.

1888. How do they manage to dip?—Generally under supervision; an assistant goes up to supervise, or I go myself. But it happens that the small settlers often attempt to cure the disease themselves.

1889. *Mr. Walker.*] I notice there has been an increase of scab in Auckland from the 31st March, 1883, to the 31st March, 1884, from 231 to 1,459?—They must have increased; but many of the names in that return have passed away. You will find them very different on the next quarterly list.

1890. I am speaking of the number of sheep infected?—The number of sheep infected has increased, but they all belong to different owners. In one day sheep may be clean, and in ten days afterwards they might be infected.

1891. Do you think there is an increase?—We have not an increase on the infected list, but I would not say that there is not more scab in Auckland now than for many years past.

1892. In order to reduce that, do you consider that it is needful you should have special assistance?—I do. I should be glad if I could get it. Under the present system I am powerless.

1893. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Not through any defect in the Act, but through not having assistance for inspection?—Yes; not having efficient assistance.

1894. *Mr. Walker.*] How many Inspectors have you in the district?—Seven.

1895. Is it not possible for you, in those months specially liable to infection, to take one or two clean districts?—What is the date of the return you have there?

1896. March, 1884. There are 170 sheep against one district, and 1,008 against the other. You say there are only two districts in which the scab breaks out in this way?—Only two.

1897. Can you give a reason why there should be more supervision now than before?—The flocks are so small, and the disease breaks out so unexpectedly, that we have the greatest difficulty in tracing it to its source in many cases; in some cases it is impossible.

1898. Do you think that changing the Inspectors would be a good thing?—I do not think that changing the district Inspectors would be a good thing at all. There is a good man in charge of Marsden. I believe that he is most anxious, and does everything he can, to get rid of scab in his district. Marsden requires a good Inspector. There are about four hundred small flocks there on very rough country. In winter it is almost impossible to inspect the country.

1899. You do not think a change of districts for Inspectors would answer?—I do not. A few wicked men, that might have a dislike to the Inspector, with a view to injure him, might spread scab all over the country.

1900. Would it not be well to let an Inspector know that if the sheep were not cleaned he would be removed?—I should be sorry to let it be known that an Inspector was to be moved in that way. He would be subjected to a great deal of annoyance. I should be sorry to have charge of a subdivision on such terms.

1901. I am not speaking of the chief, but of the assistants?—I think if you could get a conscientious man whom you could trust—a man who would do his work and not trifle with it—if I had such a man I think that the disease would be stamped out in a very short time.

1902. It seems to me absurd that it could not be stamped out in six months even as you aver?—I feel as you do, that it is absurd that the disease cannot be stamped out; but it could be stamped out with efficient assistance.

1903. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What conclusion do you come to: is the Act in fault?—I do not say that.

1904. But the administration is at fault?—It appears to be absurd that scab is not stamped out; but the moment we get one flock clean it breaks out in another. We cannot trace the sources of scab, except that, if as has been suggested, it is carried by the birds from place to place. In some places, say Mangare, time after time we have found it impossible to get the sheep clean. They are clean one day, and a short time afterwards they are infected again.

1905. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] Are there a great many starlings about there?—I cannot say in respect to any one place, but they are all over the country.

1906. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] You say you have only six or seven to assist you: how long have you been in Auckland, may I ask?—Thirty-eight years.

1907. What were you before you became Sheep Inspector?—I was engaged in farming for a great many years. I have been engaged in the inspection of sheep for twenty-two years.

1908. The sheep were scabby then?—Yes; but they were cleaned in three years.

1909. But they are scabby still?—The scab came in from the Taranaki side and from the East Coast.

1910. If I understand you right, it is not the insufficient number of your assistants that you complain of, but that you have not got the right sort of men?—That is what we want; with one or two good men more in Auckland, I think, you would soon hear the last of it.

1911. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Did that ram run with the ewes all the year round, may I ask?—They are always taken out: it may have been taken out; it may have been running with them by chance.

1912. Did you ever find a ram running with ewes in this way by chance: was it not your duty to enforce the Act?—Where there is a small flock dipped under supervision then I know that they are clean—if they were dipped under my own supervision and to my own satisfaction; then, if it was a valuable ram it would have to be destroyed, if ordered to be separated.

1913. There is nothing in the Act to destroy the ram, but there is power given to enforce a fine for a breach of the Act. Did you enforce it?—No; I did not.

1914. Then, I can see how it is that scab exists in Auckland?—It would have been the destruction of the ram.