

1915. Was it not your duty to administer the Act according to the spirit and the letter of it?—So I did.

1916. You say you have not enforced the 26th clause of the Act?—I had the ram taken away.

1917. You were simply evading the Act: have you ever found any person to run a ram with ewes in this way?—I never found it; I have not seen it. If I found it they would be instructed to take it away.

1918. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] Was that at the time of the discovery of scab or afterwards that it would be taken away?—If I saw the scab afterwards I would take proceedings.

1919. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Has Auckland ever been clean?—Yes; about four years after I took charge.

1920. I understand you to say that Auckland has been infected ever since the Act came into force?—Yes; but most of this time was under the Provincial Act.

1921. You say that scab came from Poverty Bay: are you aware that in the first instance scab was taken from Auckland to Poverty Bay?—I have no doubt of it.

1922. Poverty Bay is a rough district: do you know how long it took them to stamp scab out there?—A couple of years.

1923. Do you think that Auckland is more difficult to clean than Poverty Bay?—There you have large flockowners, who take an interest in the eradication of scab; small flockowners take no interest in it.

1924. Do you not think it necessary, with a view to cleaning your district, that you should be severe rather than otherwise?—I take proceedings for breaches of the Act whenever I find them out and can prove them; but, as I have said before, you cannot do anything after six months.

1925. Are you aware that flockowners were fined in Poverty Bay for having rams with ewes?—Yes.

1926. Then, do you think that what was fair for one part of the colony was not fair for Auckland?—Not where you are sure they are all clean.

1927. Is it your opinion that the Act should be worked partially?—No; but I think it would be oppressive where there was one with clean ewes; it would be oppressive, I think—

1928. What does the Act require—that you should enforce the fines?—If you apply it then in one case and not in another, is not that acting partially?—I should say there was some discretionary power in that case.

1929. Well, I shall put to you in this way: do you think that there is a discretionary power?—Yes; in that case, where there is one ram with a few sheep.

1930. In the case of this small flock, we will say, there could be no more than sixteen lambs; the value of them, we shall say, would be 5s. a head, that would be £4 altogether: on the other hand, with regard to those flocks in Poverty Bay, there may be four thousand ewes; what would be the value of the lambs in this case?—No doubt it would be much more.

1931. Would it be near £2,000: you say that you would inflict severe fines on these?—Yes; the danger of scab reappearing in a large flock is so much greater than in a small one, and for other reasons.

1932. The danger of scab is so great, do you not think you would order them to kill in that case?—If I had the power.

1933. Is there no discretionary power there?—No.

1934. If they do not clean, can you take the flock over?—It has never been done in my district; it was never necessary.

1935. There has been no flock in your district that has been scabby for any length of time?—No; Bainbridge's may have been on the list twice, but not more.

1936. Were Wilson's and Wright's?—No, not for any length of time.

1937. Then, you cannot account for scab being carried about?—No. Some of the owners, rather than hand their sheep over to the department, dip them and try to cure them themselves.

1938. There is one thing that may account for it probably—the character of the fencing: Is the kind of fencing used in Auckland different from that used in other parts?—It is bad fencing in my district—very imperfect in many places—in Marsden they have hardly a bit of fencing.

1939. That appears to me one important point: what is the kind of fence?—Posts and rails; the sheep can pass under it.

1940. And it has this disadvantage also that the wool gets caught in it?—Yes.

1941. Cannot the Inspector of the district enforce the provisions of the Act so that fences be kept in proper order?—Yes; he can compel an owner to keep his sheep upon his run.

1942. He can compel him to yard?—Yes; he can do that.

1943. Would not that compel him to keep his fences in proper order?—So I do, when necessary.

1944. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] The Macleans have informed me that they send their sheep for exportation in a cart.

1945. *Hon. the Chairman.*] So that they should not go along the road?—So that they do not go near the yards at all.

1946. Are the yards lime-washed?—Not unless scab has been found in them; in that case we can keep them without sheep for three months.

1947. Then, with regard to dipping, do people complain that they are obliged to dip sheep from a clean district?—I think it is quite unnecessary. I think it is a waste of money dipping in such cases where the sheep come from Gisborne or Napier. It is simply a loss of labour and money. Those are clean districts. But the other side—the West Coast—is infected. Coming from that side they should be dipped. There should be separate yards for sheep from Waitara. The greatest vigilance is required in respect to sheep coming from the West Coast. Infected sheep are brought from Wanganui and intermediate places to Hawera, from Hawera they are brought by rail to Waitara.