

95. Were they as thick as you saw them in the South, on your country?—No.

96. They never took possession of the country?—They were never allowed to.

97. It is interesting to know what ferrets can do, and whether they are certain; whether they answer the purpose. Are rabbits very numerous in any part of your country?—I have seen 5,000 killed on one little spur.

98. Are ferrets increasing or dying? When food is scarce will they attack sheep or lambs?—All the past winter we have been killing pigs that they should have food to carry them over the winter.

99. Would they have perished but for that?—I believe we have lost several. I have met with those who say that they will attack lambs. I think it is possible they would attack lambs. But I am quite sure that ferrets will not do a twentieth part of the harm that rabbits do. Part of the success of the Rabbit Act depends on its administration. Our experience is that the Inspectors have too much power. They have exercised their powers wrongfully, and abused it.

100. *Captain Russell*: Will you tell us the altitude of parts of your district above the sea-level?—Certainly; 5,000 feet.

101. *Mr. J. C. Buckland*.] Have you any basis upon which to tell us the cost of breeding ferrets?—Last year I had to kill sheep for them. I could not get other meat for them. The cost is not much. They cost me about 15s. a year, simply because there are no rabbits to feed them.

102. *Captain Russell*.] If you had rabbits you could breed them for 5s. or 6s.?—Yes.

103. Do they breed young?—Yes.

104. I think you expect to get nine in the year from the one female?—You might get two litters, but you cannot expect it.

105. You say you have no experience of ferrets attacking sheep or lambs. Do you think they would do so?—They must live on something. I do not doubt that they might.

106. How would that effect game and native birds?—There is no game bird there.

107. Have you any wekas?—Not one.

108. You say there is only one way of dealing with the rabbit-pest, and that is by poisoning with phosphorus, and then with the natural enemies of the rabbit?—Yes.

109. Will that apply to the lowlands?—Yes; to all kind of country.

110. Do you think this applicable to the richer land near the sea-level?—Yes; by using some sugar and rhodium to make it sweeter and nicer for them.

111. *Hon. the Chairman*.] Do you think they can be induced to take the poison all the year round?—Yes; of course the winter is the best time. I never saw such a wonderful clearance as was made at Flaxbourne.

112. Are you aware that the Government have recently brought out ninety-one weasels and stoats?—I have heard so.

113. Were any of them offered to you?—No.

114. Would you be surprised to hear that the Inspectors have turned them out in certain places?—If there are any rabbiters there they will be all destroyed.

115. *Captain Russell*.] Do you think that any attempt to extirpate rabbits by employing rabbiters will be a failure?—I think that rabbiters are specially hostile to the life of the ferret.

116. *Mr. Lance*.] You were asked if you were acquainted with the condition of the country round Wakatip: do you think the same method would answer there as in the Kaikouras?—Yes; I am perfectly certain.

117. *Mr. Dobson*.] You say you are breeding less ferrets this year: do you mean to leave off breeding?—Not entirely, in case there should be a spot where it would be necessary to turn them out upon.

118. Can you form no estimate of the number of wild ferrets on the run?—No.

119. *Hon. R. Campbell*.]—Are there a thousand?—I believe there are a thousand.

120. *Hon. the Chairman*.]—You mention the fact that a large number of ferrets died on the way out: was that from distemper?—Yes.

121. Do they suffer from distemper?—Yes; four years ago the distemper was very bad among ferrets.

122. Was that among those in captivity or out on the run?—Out on the run: you could see them by the hundred dead. In the following year the rabbits increased.

123. Do you infer that as a consequence of the disappearance of so many ferrets?—Yes; in consequence of that.

124. *Hon. Captain Fraser*.]—What food is given to ferrets?—The inside of sheep or anything. The captain of a ship told me he fed them almost entirely on porridge.

125. *Hon. the Chairman*.]—I have heard that if they are brought up on food of that description they are not fierce enough: what do you feed yours upon?—We always feed them upon meat and milk.

126. Have you ever heard of a disease among rabbits?—I have heard some persons speak of it, but I do not know anything of it.

127. Do you see any reason why persons appointed under the Sheep Act as Inspectors should combine two sets of duties, or that there should be separate officers under the Rabbit Act?—Where scab is prevalent the Inspector of sheep has quite enough to attend to.

128. Is there anything in regard to rabbits that you would recommend in the working of the Act?—I think that all parties should be compelled to clear alike: there is one party, or set of people, who will neither bring ferrets into the country or use poison for the purpose of clearing.

129. They can be had up—that is, prosecuted?—If the Act is not enforced, one man who holds only about 150 acres is keeping a whole country full of rabbits.

130. There is a clause in the Scab Act that, if the Inspector will not take proceedings, any sheepowner may take such steps: is there any thing corresponding to that in the Rabbit Act?—I do not know: I cannot say.

131. Is it entirely left to the Inspector to take proceedings, or can any private individual