

284. You do not think the ferrets would live unless there were rabbit-holes?—I think not. The ferret is not a strong animal at all, and it is absolutely necessary that he should be kept dry and sheltered. No doubt they will become hardier in time.

285. We have had evidence to show that the ferrets undoubtedly do increase in their wild state in New Zealand?—Yes; Kaikoura breeds splendid ferrets.

286. In some cases we hear that the Inspector requires rabbitters with dogs to be put on to kill down the rabbits, and that a number of ferrets have been killed in consequence: what is your view about that?—From what little experience I have had, I should object to rabbitters altogether. I think that the natural enemies and poisoning are the two chief means to be employed.

287. Do you think that there are any cases where rabbitters and dogs might perhaps be best?—There might be such cases, but I should think it would be a very great evil if they were killing the natural enemies at the same time. I think that the cat, too, is a most valuable animal to turn out.

288. *Mr. Walker.*] You referred to South Canterbury: have you had much experience of that rabbit country?—I was asked to report on South Canterbury, and I went over the whole of it between the Rangitata and the Waitaki.

289. Are they an appreciable nuisance in that country?—Most decidedly; they were becoming rapidly worse every year.

290. They were spreading?—Yes.

291. That means that no steps have been taken under the Act?—Yes; but there have been since. I believe they are being kept down now.

292. *Hon. the Chairman.*] When was it that you went there?—It was two years ago last June that I reported to the Government.

293. *Mr. Walker.*] Do you believe matters are improved since then?—I am told so, but I have not been in South Canterbury myself. At different stations they were killing from two to eight thousand and ten thousand rabbits in the year, chiefly by rabbitters. The rabbits there appear to breed like hares. The rabbits breed under the tussocks; you see very few holes there. It is high country, and you see them on the tops of the hills everywhere. They follow the snow up.

294. *Mr. J. C. Buckland.*] I was struck with your remark that the rabbits were much more like hares than rabbits. Have you noticed a difference between these rabbits and the rabbits coming up from Southland into Otago?—No; I have not been there.

295. You have heard that there is another kind of rabbit there?—Yes; the rabbitters in North Otago told me that the rabbits killed there were very different from the Southland rabbit—the latter being a smaller rabbit, with short ears. I take it that we have three breeds of rabbits in New Zealand, from what I have heard: the Southland rabbit, the tame rabbit, which has become partially wild, and the silver-grey rabbit.

296. Are you aware that what is called the English wild rabbit was introduced as such into New Zealand?—I have always heard that Dr. Menzies introduced them into Southland.

297. When you were between the Waitaki and Rangitata, did you go up as far as Awariri River?—I think not.

298. Did you go over to Benmore?—I went up to Mr. Sutton's station.

299. Did you hear of any ferrets doing good service there?—I do not recollect. When I was there was over two years ago.

300. *Mr. Buchanan.*] There is one question I would like to ask. Speaking of the administration of the Sheep and Rabbit Acts, are you of opinion that a better result would be gained by local administration than by administration as at present arranged?—Well, I imagine it would have to be something of the same kind that we have now. You mean by local administration, I suppose, that the counties should undertake the work.

301. Yes, or trustees?—You see you have inland counties that have no ports, and it will be one of the chief duties of the Stock Department to protect New Zealand from outside diseases, not only scab, but foot-and-mouth disease, and pleuro-pneumonia perhaps. I fancy that could hardly be done by individual counties.

302. So that, in your opinion, the administration should be of such a character as would keep the colony as far as possible within one management?—I think so. I think if you got it in the hands of the counties you would have as many ways of reading the Acts and administering them as there are counties probably.

TUESDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1884.

Mr. SUTTON, examined.

303. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Were you working under the Rabbit Act as well as the Sheep Act?—Yes.

304. Have you anything to suggest with regard to the Rabbit Act?—No.

305. *Mr. Dodson.*] You have not had much experience under that Act?—Not in Marlborough; No.

Captain RAYMOND, examined.

306. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I believe you are willing to give information to the Committee regarding the destruction of rabbits and the treatment to be adopted for getting rid of them?—Yes; I shall be happy to do so. I have had a very long experience in dealing with the pest in Southland; and, after a desperate fight with them, succeeded in bringing them under as regards number. At the finish I originated the oat-phosphorous poison, but too late to save my own property. I was sold up a few months afterwards and went out almost penniless. Since then I have devoted my time and scanty means in sending directions and answering correspondence from all parts of the colony. I have done all I could to disseminate the knowledge of my discovery.