

340. You are strongly against the natural enemies?—I am ; I think that section ought to be struck out.

341. Will you repeat your reason more precisely?—I am put to a great deal of trouble by them. What is the use of all that your Acclimatization Societies are doing in introducing birds to destroy insects, if you introduce other animals to kill them? I have myself partridges, and keep a good many turkeys to kill grasshoppers and caterpillars. It is not only that they destroy insects, they are a decided benefit to the farm. It is, I have no doubt, the same with other people as it is with me. I have three or four hundred turkeys on my place. The grasshoppers and caterpillars used to destroy everything green. Since I have had turkeys, partridges, and pheasants, I kept that plague under. If you bring ferrets, stoats, and weasels to destroy the insectivorous birds, we shall again have a plague of caterpillars and grasshoppers. We know what these have done and are capable of doing. We have them still in some parts of New Zealand and Australia.

342. *Mr. J. McKenzie.*] I understand you to say that you object to ferrets and other natural enemies on account of their destruction of game?—Yes ; partridges, turkeys, and poultry.

343. You say that if you had to clear your run you would use poison?—I would use poison, and then dogs.

344. Does it occur to you that poison does also destroy game?—It does to a certain extent, but you would take care where you laid it.

345. You would not lay it where game were?—No ; you would only poison where the rabbits were. If you have to turn to ferrets, you will have some four or five years to breed them before they can do any work.

346. May I ask you what extent of country you cleared of rabbits?—About two thousand acres.

347. That was the area which you said was very bad in consequence of rabbits being on it?—When I saw I was to be infested with them I commenced at once. I have sons, and we set to work.

348. What is the nature of the country?—It is part flat, part hill, fern and bush, and there was a good deal of clearance. The rabbits were worse on the clearance. On new artificial grasses they were very severe. We found no trouble in destroying them. We continued to destroy them while the dogs could go to work. We used to work two packs a day. We reduced them down until we could only get two rabbits in the day. We have six dogs, and we may now catch one or two rabbits a week ; that is all. Formerly they were all over the place. Where they are not very numerous you can get rid of them with dogs without poison ; where they are too thick it requires poison.

349. Is it your opinion that the most they would be able to destroy is based on your particular experience of your own land, or have you in view the properties of other people, large and small?—Yes ; I know Wairarapa well. I have been in the north of New Zealand for forty-five years.

350. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do not rabbits breed faster on some kinds of soil?—Yes ; they breed better in sandy loam than where the ground is wet.

351. Suppose that, instead of two thousand acres, you owned one hundred thousand acres of bush, flat, and hill country, would you still be of the same opinion, that the natural enemies should be excluded from their share in the destruction of the rabbit?—Yes ; but it is not only that. As one of the small farmers in the Wairarapa, I was one of a committee to establish the introduction of insectivorous birds. With this object I bred a large number of turkeys to destroy the caterpillars and other insects. I think it is class-legislation to enable a large owner to turn out weasels and ferrets to destroy a neighbour's property. You have no right to destroy his poultry ; you have no right to destroy one industry for the sake of another. I am like most of the settlers round about.

352. You were talking about ferrets injuring the small farmers?—Yes ; Mr. Walker turned out some, and they are constantly going into people's places and destroying their poultry.

353. What is your object in suggesting the amendment of the 9th section to the effect that the penalty should be increased?—It is because people do not take notice until the penalty gets a little too heavy. After a penalty of £20 or £5 people would bestir themselves.

354. Do you think that the Act is too stringent?—No ; I do not think it is stringent enough ; only the time given should be two months instead of one month. I would make the penalty £5 instead of £1.

355. Do you think the powers of the Inspector are not too arbitrary?—I do not know. If an Inspector must have interpreters he will be of no use. I do not like things permissive. I like everything straightforward, and that every one should be made to do his duty.

356. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do rats kill rabbits?—I dare say they will kill anything they are able to attack.

357. *Hon. Mr. Williamson.*] I have heard of rabbits being killed by rats : at least there was nothing else to do it?—Rats will kill anything ; they will kill the rabbit in the hole.

358. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do ferrets increase much?—They have got all about among the settlers. I do not know how.

359. Are there a good many?—I have killed four or five in my own place.

360. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Would you have the Act administered locally or as at present?—As at present.

Mr. J. MARTIN, Junior, examined.

361. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are living in Wairarapa?—Yes.

362. You wish to give some evidence about rabbits?—Yes.

363. Are there a great many on your run?—No.

364. Has there been a great number?—There has been.

365. You killed them all?—Yes,