

liver of man on four different occasions. In one of these cases these parasites were the cause of death. As a rule, however, men are seldom exposed to infection with *Coccidia* spores, for it is only under exceptional circumstances that the excrement of rabbits can contaminate what is afterwards used as food for human beings, and even if this be the case, cooking will destroy the vitality of the germs. Moreover, the *Coccidia*, as they occur in the liver, are incapable of giving rise to the disease, so that no danger arises from the eating or handling of rabbits affected by the disease. The *Coccidia* only becomes dangerous when they have undergone development in a moist place outside of the rabbit, *i.e.*, in stagnant water, marshy spots, or even on damp soil. There is evidence to show that the disease is only serious or fatal when the infection takes place repeatedly; to this repeated infection rabbits are particularly liable, but not human beings.

If there were any real danger of the disease spreading to man from wild rabbits it would be most unsuitable to even contemplate the employment of the disease. In the few cases recorded the germs were probably derived from tame rabbits, and the infection must have been the result of uncleanly habits. The keeping of tame rabbits is illegal in New Zealand, whilst rabbits are only numerous in places where the population is scanty. There is therefore no real danger of the disease spreading to human beings, and even if, where uncleanly habits prevail, a single infection should occur it would probably produce little disturbance of health. I leave it to others, however, to say how far it is right to employ the disease. It is my duty to state the nature of the disease, the conditions of its distribution, and the fact that it has been effective in assisting to reduce the rabbits in the Wairarapa.

SUMMARY.

The decrease of the rabbits in the Wairarapa has, in the first place, been due to the measures adopted by man, especially the winter poisoning. Certain parasitic diseases, however, have appeared in the district, have been largely prevalent, and have been useful in keeping down the rabbits. Of the diseases, those due to the bladder-worm and a liver-parasite have been the most effective, whilst the rabbit-itch, or scab and lice, though widely distributed, have been operative in a minor degree only.

If it were thought desirable to employ the diseases elsewhere there would be very little difficulty in propagating them. Whilst the diseases have been distinctly useful in the Wairarapa they are nevertheless not of such a character as to render unnecessary all other methods of the destruction of rabbits; they must be looked upon simply as auxiliary means of destruction.

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