

As to total reliance upon rabbit-netting, I trust the mistake of this plan will now be admitted. Rabbit-netting affords only a temporary check, a passive resistance, or a base of operation, as the case may be. It is totally useless as an active method of suppression. It makes a capital sheep-fence or for making groins for burying in shingle-rivers. I am sorry to learn from Mr. Brydone that the rabbit is appearing upon both sides of the boasted Canterbury fence, but I fully expected to hear this. In Hawke's Bay the rabbits are appearing upon every run. I have always thought it a weak remedy, and held up my solitary voice against reliance upon it in face of the opinion of all these colonies. So that it must be admitted that I have been consistent. I do not say, Give up the fencing entirely. What I say is, Do not rely upon it. Adopt the other measures of clearance above referred to, which were so successful with us.

I am happy to tell the Conference that Mr. Roberts has thoroughly confirmed my original view upon the vexed question of how to deal with the bad spots left after the rabbits have been conquered. Net them with a couple of chain of ferret-net and then turn in a few ferrets.

Very excellent use can be made of the droughts in Australia. I am not disposed to think that the tapeworm cannot be spread for want of creeks or rivers. My opinion is that it spreads immediately after the first shower, when the grass becomes absolutely deadly in its effect. This is caused by the egg from the host springing into life, and creeping up the young grass, which is then eaten by its proper home-owner. The same reasoning applies to fluke in sheep or lungworm in hoggets, &c.

I have very hastily written this paper, for the reason above-named, but it may serve to touch upon the important points at issue. My paper in the hands of the Government will more fully explain all these matters. Of course, the whole question is the most important one the colonies have to face so far as stock-rearing is concerned.

The ACTING-CHAIRMAN moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Phillips for his paper. There was a considerable amount of information in it. There was one question, however, which he would like to ask Mr. Phillips. It was this: Did he not in 1890 approve of poisoning?

Mr. COLEMAN PHILLIPS said, not as an effectual remedy.

The ACTING-CHAIRMAN asked if he had any reasons for altering his opinion. To southern minds poisoning was an absolute necessity. If it were not for poisoning he did not see how the pest could be grappled with, and if it were suspended for any one year he really thought that country would have to be abandoned. Would Mr. Phillips kindly give the reasons which led him to come to the conclusion that poisoning was not an essential step?

Mr. COLEMAN PHILLIPS replied that he had all along said since 1886 that it was necessary, but not effectual, for this reason: that Otago and Southland had increased the export of rabbitskins from nine millions to twelve millions. They poisoned every year, and yet exported such large numbers of rabbitskins. Therefore he had come to the conclusion stated. He said poisoning was very necessary. After poisoning for three or four years he had given it up, but was taking to it again. He did not think it should be relied upon in the same way as they relied upon it in Otago. He would like the discussion to be deferred until the next day.

The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said, with regard to rabbit-poisoning, the system adopted in the North was somewhat different from that in the South. They found that in the southern country, where they got good sharp frosts, and the ground as a rule was in a native state, there were plenty of bare patches on which to lay the poison without doing great injury to the stock. He had also had experience in the North Island on his property at Akiteo, where he had made a clean sweep of the rabbits in a single year. It was all grass-country, with no spaces of ground to admit of poisoned grain being laid. He had had a man carrying the poisoned grain in a bag, and another turning over small turfs, where the poisoned grain was laid. They knew that rabbits went to newly-turned-up ground, and it added to the efficacy of the grain if it was used in this way. Since then they had been scarcely bothered with the rabbits at all. In March last he rode over the whole place, and did not see a single rabbit, while before that they were in considerable numbers. If any other gentleman could add his experience to his own and that of Mr. Phillips he should be glad to hear him.

Mr. TABART would be glad to give his experience in Tasmania. It was this: They found that the primary defence in the matter of rabbit-destruction was wire-netting; but it was necessary to limit the area. Mr. Downie had wire-netted 2,000 acres of land which was badly infested with rabbits. After he had had his run enclosed he laid poisoned grain in a somewhat similar manner to that described by Mr. Roberts, but instead of turning the sods with a spade he made a furrow with a plough. By this means the work was done more expeditiously, and they got over a greater area of country. Mr. Downie's experience was this: that in eighteen months he paid for the whole of his fencing, and it returned him 200 per cent. on his outlay. Only the week before last he (Mr. Tabart) went over this run with the satisfactory result that there was not a rabbit to be seen. He was perfectly satisfied that to deal with the rabbits effectively it was necessary to make stringent regulations. They must compel every man to do his duty to his neighbour, and that could only be done by instituting prosecutions. That was the experience of Tasmania—that stringent laws were necessary, compelling the use of phosphorized grain during certain months of the year, and to follow that method up by fumigating the burrows and digging them in. Their natural enemies had gone, and he was happy to say they had not introduced stoats and weasels.

The ACTING-CHAIRMAN said their experience with the plough-furrows was that they were not so good or effective as the single sod turned up with a spade. Last winter they had used a furrow, and found that the cross-bred sheep especially picked up the grain; there was no difficulty whatever with the merino sheep. His experience had been that, while there was little or no danger in placing poisoned grain on the small sods, there was considerable danger in spreading it in a furrow. As to the regulations in force in New Zealand, they were extremely stringent; for an Inspector could have a man fined for having a single rabbit on his place. An Inspector had power to start proceedings, and his evidence alone was sufficient for conviction: they could not be more stringent