

until the settlers first succeeded in getting the rabbits under. He said, when you have got the rabbits under, husband your natural enemy, and there would be little work to do. It was necessary to take strong measures in order to cope with the difficulty. The rabbitier earned his living by killing rabbits, and would destroy the natural enemy. He was sure the only true remedy was bisulphide of carbon, with phosphorized oats in the first instance.

Mr. PARK said that for the last nine years he had given considerable attention to the destruction of rabbits by the inoculation of diseases. The idea had been started by Dr. Creed to drive the rabbits off the face of the earth by tuberculosis. He had opposed that theory from that hour to the present time. He had gone over a hundred miles of country where they proposed to start from the centre, and at the place they started they found from 60 to 80 per cent. were affected by coccidium; but the rabbits were as numerous as they were at the beginning. He had no faith whatever in disease exterminating the rabbits—they bred too fast for that: the natural enemy of the rabbit was man. If they got population they would exterminate the rabbits, but not until then.

Mr. TABART said this was a very important question, and it was an extraordinary thing that, although you might meet twenty practical men, you would never find three of the same opinion on the matter of extermination. He was carrying out the provisions of the Rabbit Act in Tasmania, and he advocated wire-netting as the primary step, to be followed by poisoning. They found the laying of poison was most effective, and that the merino sheep would not take it so readily as the cross-bred sheep, particularly those coming off stubble-land. Trapping he considered the worst possible means of getting rid of the pest. The trapper would destroy the rabbits to a certain extent, but would take care that eradication did not follow; and with the trapper he believed they were encouraging the worst breed of people on the face of the earth. They were only encouraging an increase of population for the gallows; and that would be the effect in New Zealand if they encouraged trapping. Hunting with a large pack of dogs had been very effective; also fumigating and digging out burrows, and filling them in. Unless they could get the occupiers of land to take simultaneous action they would always have rabbits. This was the action required. He thought simultaneous action was all that was required. In using the plough you just turned the soil over, and got the furrow as level as possible; rabbits play along it, and take the poisoned grain freely in the proper season; but you wanted a clean country. It was necessary that the grain should be slightly covered, otherwise the minahs would take it all.

Mr. COLEMAN PHILLIPS was very glad to hear the various expressions of opinion. He wished to hear what Mr. Bruce had to say on the matter, because he had stated that they had waves of rabbits to contend with; but that gentleman was not now representing the Rabbit Department, which had been separated from his. In bringing his paper before the Conference he (Mr. Phillips) had not done it so much for New Zealand as for Australia, and he was afraid that the New Zealand representatives had confined their attention to their own experience, and had overlooked the other colonies. With regard to waves of rabbits going from droughty districts to grassy country, he thought that the netting erected would prove no remedy. The fact that rabbits were dying in millions near the fences did not prove that it was a remedy. What he wished to do was to put down the young rabbits before destroying these millions. With regard to what Mr. Ritchie had said as to the difficulty of getting combination amongst the farmers, he (Mr. Phillips) thought the settlers should be told that if they wanted the rabbits they could have them. So long as Government interfered the settlers would not combine to deal with the pest. Mr. Ritchie objected to spreading disease amongst the rabbits; but disease had been in the English warrens for centuries, and all that he (Mr. Phillips) was referring to was the disease natural to the rabbit. Mr. Lawry had agreed with him to a considerable extent. Mr. Roberts had warned the people of Canterbury, and he (Mr. Phillips) had warned them before, not to rely on the fence; and they should not do so; neither should Queensland. With regard to the ferrets, they did not do the work expected of them, and he believed the great majority of them did not live more than six months. The best fence erected was that in the Murrumbidgee district; but rabbits were carried over the Murrumbidgee during flood-time, and then turned the flank along the fence erected. Rabbits would turn the flank of any fence. As to the use of any one poison referred to by Mr. Roberts, he thought its constant use had proved its ineffectuality.

Mr. ROBERTS asked, in what way?

Mr. COLEMAN PHILLIPS replied that they had used it for a great many years, and they still had the rabbits. After using the poison two or three times they should not require to use it again. He had used the poison, but not in the plough-furrows, as many people used it. He found that turning over the sod was better than a long plough-furrow. Mr. Bidwill had supported the use of bisulphide of carbon. He (Mr. Phillips) said, "Use it once, and then be careful not to use it again;" because if they poisoned off the rabbits they would also poison off their natural enemy. If the Conference passed a resolution to the effect that the natural enemy was not useful, it would fly in the face of nature. In reply to Mr. Park's remarks as to the inefficacy of coccidium—liver-rot—and his having found that from 60 to 80 per cent. were affected, all he (Mr. Phillips) could say was that the liver-rot had cleared Tintinallagy. He knew that liver-rot and bladder-fluke had cleared the pest in his country. Liver-rot was in all the rabbit-warrens in England, and they were very useful diseases. Mr. Park had said that the natural enemy of the rabbit was man; he said that the natural friend of the rabbit was man, because in England they killed thirty millions every year. In France they had a vast number of rabbits, and in Belgium and other countries—the more men the more rabbits. Nature had made the rabbit a wonderful food-supply, and nature would not allow it to be cleared off. He was glad to learn that Mr. Tabart agreed with him as to the viciousness of trapping. That man is the true friend of the rabbit is proved by the one fact that there are a thousand million rabbits in Australia to-day where fifty years ago there was scarcely one.

Mr. PARK remarked that the majority were affected when they were from two to four months old, and if they lived for six months they recovered from the disease.