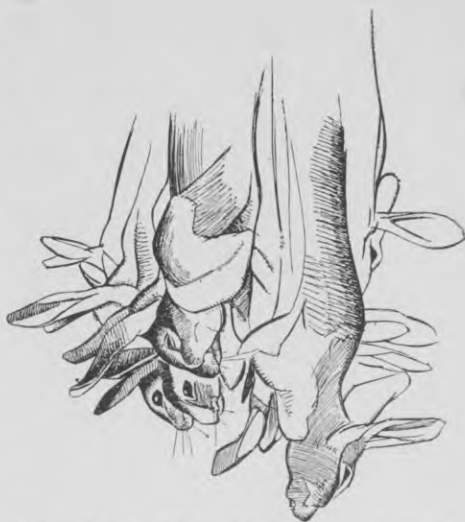


Otago Central rabbits, because of the rigorous winter climate and high country are remarkably free from disease; the manager of the factory said he had seen only one rabbit in a year with anything worse than an unhealthy back which the bucks sometimes develop from fighting each other. Close inspection is always made, however, for hydatids, a disease which is found more often in Southland, parts of which are also thickly infested with rabbits.

From the chiller, where the temperature is kept about 40 degrees Fahrenheit, the cases of carcasses (about 35 to a case in summer, 30 in winter) go to the "snowbox" or freezing-chamber, where they stay for four days, the temperature varying from about 12 degrees to zero. (That room would freeze more than rabbits if the door jammed with one of the employees inside.) After the freezing processes, cases are packed into railway vans, specially insulated to stop deterioration for at least three days, for transport to Dunedin. Eight thousand rabbits can be dealt with a day if necessary; and during the four busiest months more than 80,000 are handled.

In the skinning-room rabbits are everywhere. French greys and black and whites predominate, there is an occasional black and a few hares. All have big, even at this stage, bright eyes. Some are minus a leg from an earlier encounter with a trap. Rolls of scrim, with which the hauls are protected from



flies, lie waiting to be distributed to the trappers. Chirping flocks of birds, mostly sparrows, hop and flutter about (Alexandra birds must be the best fed in New Zealand; as soon as the fruit season is past its best they leave the orchards to come for the pickings of fat at the rabbit-factory). So these are the rabbits which, in addition to their other (and acknowledged) uses, sometimes are served as chicken, used in some salmon and shrimp pastes, the skins manufactured into expensive and rare fur coats. Exactly how, you wonder, did human beings come to use the expression "as silly as a rabbit."



Twelve Miles of Ink.—A fountain pen which needs to be filled only once a year is now produced in Britain. The pen has no nib, but a stylographic point—a wire enclosed in a tube which releases ink when pressed. Its barrel, which holds twelve miles of ink, is only the size of an ordinary fountain pen. The pen, invented during the war, was designed for pilots to write at heights where air pressure is so low that an ordinary fountain pen will explode. Overseas customers will be the first to use this novel invention, reports the *London Daily Mail*. Only 1 per cent. of the pens now being manufactured will be retained for the British home market.