

11. Are there any silver grey rabbits in the district?—I have not seen any.
12. Could you mention some of the parts of the Wairarapa where these rabbits have become such a nuisance?—There is Taratahi and some of the places above Masterton. They have here increased in very large numbers, but they are on the increase, more or less, throughout the whole of the district from Palliser Bay to twenty miles north of Masterton.
13. Are there any on the Brancepeth estate?—Within the last six months they have made their presence felt there.
14. In your opinion would the increase of these rabbits have a depreciatory effect upon the value of property in this district?—I believe the increase, if it continues at the same rate as it has done during the past year or two, will have a very detrimental effect upon the district.
15. *The Chairman.*] Is the district made up of farms and runs?—Yes; principally the latter. The country is principally pastoral and laid down in English grasses.
16. *Mr. Seymour.*] What is the character of the country generally?—Hilly.
17. And the soil?—A rich marl.
18. *Mr. Andrew.*] And you say the rabbits have spread so widely, and so largely increased in numbers that the question of their continued increase is becoming serious?—Yes; they have spread greatly, especially in the Te Purupuru. On Mr. Buchanan's run they have been exceedingly destructive, so much so that he has been obliged to employ men to kill them.
19. *Mr. Wason.*] Of your own knowledge have the rabbits done serious injury?—They have not done us any injury yet.
20. But they have done Mr. Buchanan injury?—Yes; decidedly. It costs him, I should think, £150 to £200 a year.
21. Has he been obliged to decrease his stock?—I think not. This run, I may say, is not fully stocked.
22. Has any settler in the Wairarapa been obliged to decrease his stock owing to the rabbits?—I have heard people of the Taratahi say that they were unable to keep the number of sheep that they had done before.
23. *Mr. Andrew.*] Small farmers? The Taratahi District is settled by small farmers, is it not?—Yes.
24. And small farmers have complained that the carrying capacity of their farms or runs has been diminished owing to the rabbit nuisance?—Yes.
25. *Mr. Wason.*] How many rabbits would a man, an ordinary good shot, kill in a day?—I could scarcely answer that. I have heard of boys going out with guns and dogs and killing a hundred in a day.
26. *Mr. Seymour.*] The soil is favourable to the rabbits burrowing, is it not?—Yes; in some parts. The soil varies very much. There are some sandy blocks where they can burrow, but most of the burrows I have seen have been mere breeding burrows.
27. *Mr. Wason.*] Can you suggest any method of exterminating rabbits?—I think it would be impossible to exterminate them; it would be as difficult as attempting to exterminate rats.
28. Are you aware what will be the consequence if some steps are not taken to exterminate them?—I am aware that the consequence will be a very serious deterioration in the value of property, and there would be a very great annual cost to landholders to keep them down.
29. They have increased very rapidly during the last few months?—Very rapidly indeed.
30. *Mr. Seymour.*] Do you know of anything to lead you to suppose that the rabbits would not exist in such large numbers if unable to burrow?—I think they would not, although I may say this, that they do exist in large numbers where they are able to get into logs and ferns.
31. The reason they have not done much damage in the Wairarapa as yet is that the land is mostly taken up in runs?—Yes.
32. There is no extent of grain crops in the district?—No.
33. Still they have decreased the carrying capacity of some of the runs?—Yes; certainly they have.
34. What remedy can you suggest?—I can only suggest the use of ferrets and dogs. Weasels might be introduced, and I think there should be greater facilities given for the residents in these districts getting powder. On some stations the cost of powder forms a heavy tax.

Mr. GEORGE BEETHAM being in attendance, was examined as follows:—

35. *Mr. Andrew.*] You live in the same district as your brother?—Yes.
36. And I suppose you can corroborate all that he has said?—Yes, entirely. I have heard that the rabbit pest has interfered a good deal with the farmers of the Taratahi. Their gardens have been sadly plundered, and they inform me that it has become impossible to raise cabbages.
37. The small farmers of the Taratahi are not at all well supplied with butchers' meat, are they?—No, they are not.
38. Yet, notwithstanding their efforts to get rabbits for food, they have not been able to keep the rabbits down?—Certainly not.
39. *Mr. Wason.*] Do you think the people have any adequate idea of the ruin likely to come upon them if the pest be not subdued?—I think they are just now becoming alive to it. It is dawning upon them, and an agitation is arising on the subject.
40. Can you suggest any means for alleviating the pest or checking its growth?—It is a very awkward subject to legislate upon. I think that any action which might be taken should be through the Pastoral associations. If the Government subsidized these associations to a certain extent it would perhaps lead to some united action.
41. The Government assisted to check the cattle plague; and this is worse than the cattle plague; therefore you think the Government should assist in the matter?—Yes.
42. *The Chairman.*] Is the district a freehold or leasehold district?—Most of the land is freehold.