

43. *Mr. Andrew.*] There are a great number of holdings under 100 acres?—Yes, about the townships.

44. And there are a good many runs varying from 300 to 1,000 acres in area?—Yes; such runs as Manaia and Carter's. It is the larger runs in which the rabbit difficulty will occur principally.

45. The danger is greater on large runs than on the smaller runs?—Much greater.

46. You can only suggest the increase of the power of the Pastoral associations?—Yes; as I said before, it is a very awkward subject to legislate upon. I recollect the thistle nuisance which, in some degree, was similar to this. The Provincial Council undertook to legislate upon the subject, but I do not think much good was done.

47. Are there any Highway Boards in the district?—There are three large highway districts in the Wairarapa, each of which has its Board.

48. Do you not think that they might deal with the question, collecting special rates for the purpose of eradicating the pest?—I think very probably they will do so. At any rate I should hope to see the County Councils take the matter up.

49. I presume the small farmers at the Taratahi can keep the rabbits down on their properties?—They have not done so hitherto, as they do not seem to have seen the necessity for doing so. I think they will, however, keep the nuisance down in future.

50. Does anybody else besides Mr. Buchanan keep men to destroy the rabbits?—I believe Mr. Waterhouse does.

51. I suppose you will have to keep men if you find the rabbits increasing?—Yes; we are keeping one hand now as a precaution, and it may become necessary to keep more than one on presently.

52. Then do you not think it would be desirable that there should be legislation so as to render it compulsory upon people to keep their runs clean?—I think such a law would be a dead letter.

53. Would it not be very hard if such a law did not exist. Suppose, for instance, that a number of runholders spent a good deal of money in clearing their runs, but some man holding three or four acres in the midst of them declined to take any steps whatever to clear his run, would not the work of the other runholders be useless?—Yes, it would.

54. *Mr. Andrew.*] There is, as a matter of fact, a large block of Native land, some 200,000 acres in extent, between Mr. Waterhouse's run and yours, is there not?—Yes.

55. *The Chairman.*] Are there many rabbits in that block?—Yes; they are breeding very rapidly on that run.

56. *Mr. Andrew.*] There is also one block between the Taueru and the Ruamahunga Rivers?—Yes.

57. *The Chairman.*] There are some large holdings in this part of the district?—Yes; all the properties in the East Coast District are large, and it is on the East Coast that the rabbits have principally increased.

58. *Mr. Andrew.*] Were the rabbits, when first found two or three years' ago, confined to one locality by the Ruamahunga River, and since then have they crossed the river, and are now breeding in all the districts?—Yes; during the last five or six years they have increased in all directions.

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WEDNESDAY, 2ND AUGUST, 1876.

Mr. WILLIAM SMITH, of Kaikoura, being in attendance, was examined as follows:—

59. *The Chairman.*] Where do you live, Mr. Smith?—Kaikoura, in the Marlborough province.

60. Have you lived there long?—Ten or twelve years.

61. In the same particular place?—Yes.

62. How long is it since the rabbits appeared in the locality? Six years?—Longer than that, but they have not become a nuisance until lately. I should suppose it is fourteen years since they were first turned out in the province.

63. What is the variety of the rabbits in this district?—The silver grey. I believe they are called Lord Galvin's breed, but they are a French kind, and better known as the silver grey.

64. Were they numerous when you first went to the district?—No, they were not.

65. How long is it since they began to become a nuisance?—Some six or seven years since they first became troublesome.

66. Have they increased much during the last year or two?—I do not think they have increased much of late in our neighbourhood, though they have spread further over the district, because the skins being more or less valuable, many people have been engaged in killing the rabbits for the sale of the skins in the winter season, and the runholders all the year round, to abate the nuisance. In this way the nuisance has been partially kept down.

67. What is the value of the skins?—The market is not at all steady. At first very good prices were obtained, but the value seems to be less now. I may say that some time ago I employed a man to kill rabbits in a paddock of 1,500 acres, and took the skins from him at 4d. each, or 4s. a dozen. I also found him in ammunition.

68. *Mr. Seymour.*] Did you give him his food?—No.

69. And the skins are worth 4d. each?—That was the value of skins taken in the winter months, but the skins taken in the summer months were not so valuable owing to there being a difference in the quality of the fur. You would now get about 3½d. for the winter skins. There has been a reduction in price, for which I can only account by the circumstance that the supply is coming up to the demand.

70. *The Chairman.*] Is the country freehold or leasehold—that is, is it a farming country or pastoral?—Both; there are some large properties and a good few farms.

71. What is the nature of the country? Easy for the rabbits to burrow in?—Yes, the principal