

natural enemies would not be just as effective; because in the high country it will be so difficult and expensive to keep the fences in repair, and the snow will make it so much worse.

283. I was referring to such places as where there was a migration?—I think the fencing will stop them.

284. You say that the Act has been suspended. You mean that it has not been practically enforced?—It has not been enforced at all.

285. Apparently the Government administration has not worked satisfactorily with you?—The Act has not been worked at all.

286. Would you approve of creating rabbit districts, which should be administered by trustees, who should be elected by the ratepayers, the ratepayers being those who pay the sheep-rate in the district?—I think that would be a great improvement.

287. Do you think that would be better than administration by County Councils or Road Boards?—I certainly think it would. The general feeling in our district is in favour of something of that kind being done.

288. *Hon. Mr. Buckley.*] Do you know if anybody has been summoned for a breach of the Rabbit Act?—Yes; there have been some summoned.

289. Many?—On the 19th February there were a few convictions got—I think about half a dozen altogether; but they were principally against small farmers.

290. Not against the large holders?—There was one large holder—the holder of Waipapa. He was fined £1 5s., I think.

291. I am anxious to know upon what authority you say that the land was taken up by the Government from the Bank of New Zealand?—Simply from what I have heard.

292. Was it not in the possession of Gibson when it was abandoned?—Not to the best of my belief.

293. Have you any idea to whom the run belongs?—The general opinion in our district was that it belonged to the Bank of New Zealand; and I have pretty good authority for saying that it did, because the Bank of New Zealand asked me in September, 1884, if I would take charge of that country.

294. For the bank?—Yes.

295. Before it was abandoned?—Yes. It was in September, or the beginning of October, 1884. It was after the last Committee had sat.

296. *Hon. the Chairman.*] With regard to the rabbit-skins, you do not take sufficient from your run, I suppose, to export?—No, we have never sent any away. I know it does not pay expenses to send them away.

297. Not when there is a large quantity?—Men who have sent them away reckon to lose a third.

298. Would you recommend that a bonus should be offered by the Government for the skins?—I would not be prepared to recommend that.

299. You think it would not be necessary, or not advisable?—I think the people could dispose of the skins themselves. It would be offering a bonus for men to keep rabbits.

300. You do not think it would have the opposite effect?—No. It would be a rather dangerous experiment, I think.

301. *Mr. Fulton.*] Your opinions expressed with regard to the administration of the Act relate to purely pastoral country?—Yes.

302. Not to farms at all?—Where you have districts cut into small farms I do not think there is so much to be feared from rabbits.

303. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You say that the snow drives the rabbits from the hills: some of your land is 5,000ft. high?—5,600ft. is one height.

304. Rabbits can live there well enough in summer, I suppose?—Yes. There is nothing for them to eat in winter, and they come down on to the flats.

305. Will the snow kill them?—That I could not say.

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TUESDAY, 1ST JUNE, 1886.

Mr. B. BAILEY, Superintending Inspector of Sheep, examined.

306. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You are Superintending Inspector under the Sheep and Rabbit Act?—Yes.

307. I suppose you travel about the various districts of the colony?—I do.

308. You have done so during the past year?—I have.

309. Have you been able to form an opinion as to whether the rabbit nuisance has increased or decreased since you were before a similar Committee to the present two years ago?—Until this year it had decidedly decreased. This year, I believe, in numbers it has not increased, but, owing to the dry summer, the efforts to stamp it out have not been so successful as they would otherwise have been. There are not more rabbits than there were, but they have not been reduced at the same rate as in previous years.

310. Do you think they have spread?—I do most decidedly; they are over a larger area.

311. And they still remain as numerous on the area they already occupy?—No, not quite; there has been a considerable reduction.

312. I suppose it varies?—In some places they are fewer, and in some they are more numerous.

313. How was it that the efforts to destroy the rabbits were not so efficacious this time? Do you mean that they would not take the poison?—They will not take the poison in the summer time. In the winter I believe we shall have equally as great success as previously.