

1584. You believe in summer poisoning where the rabbits are numerous?—Yes; but, as I have said, they will not take the poison so readily in summer as in winter.
1585. Have you had any occasion to proceed against stockowners who did not poison the rabbits during the summer in the Wairarapa?—Yes.
1586. In many cases?—I think I took proceedings against fifteen.
1587. *Mr. Dodson.*] Did you sow grain not poisoned on the furrow before putting down the poisoned grain, so as to accustom them to it?—No.
1588. *Captain Russell.*] Had you any experience of rabbits before you went to the Wairarapa?—Yes.
1589. In this country?—Yes.
1590. Does your district go to the Seventy-Mile Bush?—Yes.
1591. As far as Eketahuna?—That is now lately in Mr. Drummond's district.
1592. The rabbits have diminished there, have they not?—Yes.
1593. How has that been brought about?—Chiefly by poisoning.
1594. How far north have rabbits been killed in numbers during the last year?—At Alfredtown, but not many, being the north of my district.
1595. How far up the Seventy-Mile Bush Road?—I may say that part is free of rabbits.
1596. They used to be there in considerable numbers?—No.
1597. They were up that road?—Up at Dorset's, but never thick in that part.
1598. Were they supposed to travel much in the bush?—No; not in the dense bush.
1599. Are you quite sure of that?—They will go up the creeks and banks of the rivers, and where there are clearings in the bush they will go.
1600. Then, you think it necessary to guard against rabbits spreading into the bush on clearing it?—Yes.
1601. With regard to summer poisoning, do you not think, if one-half of a piece of country were eaten down bare, you might succeed in poisoning?—I think so.
1602. Do you think it is mainly or entirely owing to the dry season that they took the poison this year?—I could not say; but they did take it better this year.
1603. How many miles of wire-netting fencing could a man keep in perfect repair in ordinary country?—He could ride along a great number of miles—about twenty miles, I should think. It greatly depends upon the nature of the country and its accessibility.
1604. You know nothing of the fence between Hawke's Bay and the Wairarapa District?—No.
1605. *Hon. Mr. Holmes.*] How have the ferrets answered in your district?—Very well; but they are so liable to distemper. The numbers require to be kept up, or else the rabbits will rise again.
1606. Do you think the Government would be justified in introducing stoats and weasels, and providing a breeding-establishment?—Yes; it would be a great benefit to the country.
1607. Especially for the high country?—Yes.
1608. Do you think it would be desirable for the Government to grant a bonus of 1d. per skin as an inducement for those who are suffering from the pest to kill the rabbits down?—I could not say. We had a bonus down in Southland of a halfpenny per skin.
1609. Do you consider the present minimum penalty of £1 under the Act sufficient?—No, decidedly not.
1610. For holders of from five thousand to twenty thousand acres you would think a ten-pound penalty little enough?—Yes, for first conviction.
1611. And of a hundred thousand acres, more than that even?—Yes.
1612. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do you think there is any prospect of getting rid of rabbits in this country?—No, not to exterminate them entirely; but they could be kept down to a minimum by the settlers working with a will and determination. The difficulty is to get them to work simultaneously during the summer months.
1613. *Hon. Mr. Holmes.*] You are in favour of a wire-netting fence?—Not as a legal fence in my district; but in a badly-infested district I believe it would be proper to have it fenced in.
1614. *Hon. Mr. Acland.*] Do you know Mr. Hawkins's property in the Wairarapa?—Yes.
1615. Has he not used wire-netting fencing largely?—Yes.
1616. Has it succeeded in his case?—That is out of my district. Mr. Drummond will be able to answer that question.
1617. *Captain Russell.*] Are not owners of land more alive to their interests in respect to the rabbit pest than they were a few years ago?—There is a great deal more difficulty with the occupiers of Native leaseholds. With the owners of land I have no difficulty at all to speak of.
1618. Do you think a Board elected by payers of sheep-rates would strengthen your hands?—In my district I think the Act is working satisfactorily.
1619. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What sort of leaseholds are they to which you have just referred?—Lands leased from Natives by Europeans.
1620. Do you make any difference between those and freeholds in requiring the occupiers to kill?—No; but these lands have not been through the Court. All infested land of such description should be put through the Court, and there would be less difficulty in keeping the rabbits down. In reference to the Rabbit Act, I would like to suggest that, in the 9th clause, the word "and" in the phrase "and, having so commenced," &c., should be altered to "or, having commenced, did not continue such action," &c.
1621. *Mr. Dodson.*] Have you found any difficulty in regard to that?—Yes, it came out in two or three cases on the last occasion. Then, also, the local Boards should be compelled to destroy rabbits on the unformed portion of roads. The roads are supposed to be one chain wide; but only a portion, or track, is made, and the other portion is abandoned to grass and the rabbits. The roads I refer to are fenced off with rabbit-proof fences on both sides by owners.