

1992. To the great loss of the people who were doing their duty in keeping down rabbits?—Certainly.

1993. Do you know that the Inspectors in the Wairarapa have admitted that there has been a great increase of rabbits during the summer?—I was not aware that they had admitted it, but I am aware that such is a fact.

1995. Are you also aware that when asked why they had not taken steps to suppress the rabbits they pleaded the impossibility of doing it—in other words, if they enforced the Act they would be attempting to compel an impossibility on the part of the settlers, who could not kill them?—I am not aware of that.

1996. You are perfectly satisfied that this plea, if used by the Inspectors, was not a tenable one—in other words, that rabbits could have been poisoned this summer so as to have kept them down?—I am confident of that. No one seemed inclined to try the poison at that time of the year, saying it was useless.

1997. In the limestone country, where the rabbits were once very numerous, they are now very scarce indeed?—Yes.

1998. How has that been brought about?—Ferrets, I think.

1999. Was there not a heavy poisoning in the first instance?—Yes; and the ferrets seem to have kept them down since.

2000. *Hon. Mr. Walker.*] In regard to mixing the phosphorus, what should be the temperature of the water in mixing?—About 207°.

2001. *Hon. the Chairman.*] In what direction are the rabbits travelling in your district?—They are continually travelling north.

2002. They are not spreading out to the sides?—No.

2003. Can you account for that at all?—No.

2004. Have the rabbits got into the main range of the Tararua?—Yes, they have to a certain extent, but nothing to speak of.

2005. It is covered with bush?—Except the tops.

2006. Have they got to the tops?—I do not think so; but the clear country at the top is at the snow-line, and in winter is covered with snow.

2007. And I suppose they would not go through the bush?—Yes.

2008. I should have supposed they would have taken to the range because they would not be so molested?—There is a different kind of bush that they will take to. I do not think they will take to black birch.

2009. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do you mean the temperature you mentioned is the temperature when the phosphorus is added to the water?—Yes.

2010. It is never allowed to boil?—No.

2011. How do you mix the phosphorus?—Nine gallons of water to 100lb. oats and 1lb. phosphorus. We boil the water first and cool it down before putting the phosphorus into it; then add the grain and stir it and cover it up, and revolve it for six hours, and then leave it for from twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

2012. And does the grain absorb all the water?—Yes, nearly all.

2013. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Do you break the phosphorus into the water?—No—just put the sticks in. They dissolve very rapidly. There is no doubt that when grass takes fire from poisoned grain it is because the phosphorus is not properly mixed.

2014. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] Do you not think there should be a little more grain to the water, so that it may absorb it all? Is there not a loss?—I do not think so.

DEAR SIR,—

Gladstone, 5th July, 1886.

I should like to add to my evidence that “I consider the mistake people make with regard to poisoning rabbits is that they consider one poisoning sufficient to destroy rabbits, and then they allow them to increase again till the following winter, when the same thing has to be done over again; whereas I am confident it is only by successive poisonings that the rabbit difficulty is to be overcome.”

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Joint Rabbit Nuisance Committee.

NATHANIEL GRACE.

Mr. DRUMMOND, Inspector under the Sheep and Rabbit Act for Wairarapa North, examined.

2015. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Are there many rabbits in your district?—In portions of it there are a good many.

2016. Have they been long there?—Yes; seven or eight years.

2017. Are they increasing?—Not at the present moment.

2018. Are they decreasing?—Yes; decreasing.

2019. In number and extent, or simply in number, and extending in area?—I do not know that they are decreasing in extent now. They are now poisoning.

2020. Have they been increasing during the last year?—They went ahead very fast during the last summer.

2021. Was that simply in consequence of the dry season?—It was through the dry season.

2022. If it had not been such a dry season, you do not think they would have increased so much?—I do not think so.

2023. Is it in consequence of the exceptionally dry season, or is it for want of precautions in keeping the rabbits down?—I consider it was caused by the season to a certain extent. There are a few settlers, however, that it is difficult to get to work properly.

2024. Do you think the people are taking proper precautions in your district to kill the rabbits?—Yes; because we compel them.

2025. What steps do you use to compel them?—When I find they do not take steps, I give them notice under the 9th section to destroy the rabbits, and then I lay an information under the 10th section if they do not comply with the notice.