

619. What sort of machinery?—The Agent-General used the same means that were used for the Government importations, and the parties introducing them paid the expense.

620. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Are you aware that in Canada there is a disease amongst the rabbits which is said to be very fatal?—I am not. I have heard that there is in Germany.

621. Have you any reports from other Governments that would give information on this subject?—None.

622. *Hon. Mr. Buckley.*] In reference to the Inspector who was reported for interfering, was he not removed?—He was removed to another district.

623. Has it not come to your knowledge that these diaries are not to be relied upon?—I have never had a case of that sort.

624. Was it not on account of that the agents were placed under the Inspector for the district?—It was so that they could be under their supervision.

625. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Have you lately had information of the rabbits in the Waikato?—I knew there were rabbits there three years ago; but it is only lately they have spread beyond the spot where they were.

626. They have been taking steps between Alexandra and Newcastle, and along Waipa, to destroy rabbits?—I do not know that country sufficiently well to place each locality; but I know that a lot of the country has been cleared there, and that the owners have been compelled to keep up to it.

627. Who built the first three miles of the Waimate fence?—The Government, I believe. It was before my time.

628. Do you know why it was built?—To stop scabby sheep from the Wairarapa.

629. Who put the netting on?—That I cannot say. I believe it was those who taxed themselves for it.

*Mr. G. S. Cooper:* The fence was taken by the Government, and when it was decided to make it rabbit-proof the Government imported a large quantity of wire-netting and put up three miles, and then the sheep-farmers interested in the expulsion of rabbits raised a voluntary rate among themselves, and appointed a committee, and the Government handed them over all the remainder of the wire-netting and other material, and they have carried it on since. A sum was also afterwards given as a subsidy.

*Hon. the Chairman:* If the Government thought it necessary to put up a rabbit fence, and commenced to do so, why did they not go on with it?

*Mr. G. S. Cooper:* I am not quite sure about that. It was in Sir John Hall's time, when he had Mr. Maunsell working with him.

630. *Hon. the Chairman* (to witness).] Do you think it desirable that some steps should be taken to import weasels?—I do, certainly; and intended suggesting, if I had an opportunity, that one or two islands which are a good distance from the mainland should be devoted to their breeding.

631. Do you think the difficulty of getting them out is insuperable?—I am not prepared to say. There are only three vessels that we can bring them out in—the “Ionic,” “Doric,” and “Coptic.” They have special accommodation for such purpose.

632. Have attempts been made to make arrangements with other boats?—No.

THURSDAY, 3RD JUNE, 1886.

Mr. BAYLY further examined.

633. *Mr. Lance.*] To sum up the whole matter, the position is this: We want to stamp out rabbits in the country, or as nearly as practicable. Can you suggest any means—I do not care what—which would be likely to tend more quickly to that result than the present one?—I think I have already made one suggestion which tends in that direction—to offer a large reward to see if some one could not discover some disease with which to inoculate the rabbits. I think we ought to have a detached department, where everything connected with the working of poisons and destroying rabbits could be carried out. If we could find a summer-poison it would go a great way towards the matter. When I was down south I made it my business to see Professor Ivey, at the Lincoln College; and I believe that experiments could be made there at a minimum cost, as they have all the appliances. The remedies, however, would have to be taken to the infested country, and tried there by practical men. Another means would be to get a shipment of stoats and weasels and put them on an island, to see if we could not breed them. As far as our present system is concerned, if carried out strictly, I know of no improvement.

634. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You think that the system at present adopted with regard to the Inspectors and agents, if properly carried out, is sufficient?—I do. I know of no improvement.

635. *Hon. Mr. Walker.*] And yet the rabbits are not the least on the decrease?—They were till this summer.

635A. It does not speak much for the system, I think?—This summer was a very extraordinary one.

636. If this is a mild winter they will go on increasing just the same?—No; I do not think so. A complete sweep could be made if simultaneous action were taken. That is one thing, however, which is improving every year: the people are becoming more practical, and the system is being better carried out every winter.

637. *Mr. Dodson.*] The men you employed to bring out the stoats and weasels were experts?—Yes. They were very successful in bringing them out.

638. Have you had any difficulty in breeding them in this country?—I often conversed on that subject with the men who brought them out, and they said it was impossible. One of them said that on one occasion he reared by putting young weasels to a cat till they were six months old; and then they became as untamable as wild ones.