

689. Would it not be well to establish a separate bureau, in which all these questions should be centred?—That may be. I do not know whether it would not be better to hand the whole stock question over to the Agricultural Department.

690. *Hon. Mr. Buckley.*] What do you mean in regard to the Act being administered partially?—I said that it had been administered impartially so far as I know.

691. Have not instructions been sent to the Inspectors to administer the Act without fear or favour?—Yes. The instruction has always been to administer the Act without fear, favour, affection, or malice.

692. And to strictly carry out the provisions of the Act?—Yes, certainly—impartially and strictly.

693. *Hon. Mr. Larnach.*] Do I understand from the tenor of your remarks that the districts as situated now are too large?—No. I think they are pretty large, but they would be inconvenient if too small.

694. There is a greater difficulty in keeping mountainous country clear of rabbits than level?—That is the difficulty.

695. You are aware that in the South the country is very mountainous?—Yes.

696. You think if the districts were reduced in size the difficulty would be got over better?—No doubt it would be desirable to cut them up into smaller districts, if it was the duty of the department to kill rabbits; but it is only the duty of the department to see that other people kill them.

697. Do you not think that Boards could more easily deal with smaller districts than with districts to the extent to which they now run?—Yes; in the country you speak of no doubt they would. I may mention that I am now getting out the expenditure at present incurred in destroying rabbits on unoccupied Crown lands; also, I can give you the expense of the department generally from last year.

698. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You do divide the expense between sheep and rabbits?—It is impossible to divide the salaries, because a man holding the double office receives only one salary; but the other expenditure is divided.

699. But in other departments you divide the salaries?—In some departments, but not in others. There would be no great object gained.

700. With regard to Mr. Bayly, has he power to dismiss any of his Inspectors if he is satisfied in his own mind that the officer is not carrying out the duties of his position satisfactorily?—No; he would refer the matter to the Minister.

701. You cannot say that his responsibility is unlimited unless he has entire control over his officers?—He has the power of issuing instructions to them, and he could suspend an officer on the spot if he saw reason to do so; but the dismissal or appointment must lie with the Minister in every case.

702. Has any recommendation of his to dismiss an officer ever been carried out?—He has never recommended a dismissal, I think. He has recommended changes in station and promotions and appointments of new men.

703. His recommendations have always been carried out?—Yes

704. Of course you will recognize that a person placed in that position might feel satisfied that a certain officer was not doing his duty, and yet there might be pressure brought to bear to retain him in his place?—Such a thing is possible in all human institutions, but I am not aware of its ever having been done.

705. In regard to the stoats and weasels, can you say whether it is the intention of the Government to continue their importation?—I think the Government would be willing to continue the importation if it were possible; but the owners of the only vessels that are qualified to bring them out have flatly refused to bring out any more.

706. I did not understand from evidence given the other morning that there was no prospect of any more being brought out. I understood it was simply left for persons to make arrangements, but that arrangements could be made?—Arrangements could be made for everything except the ship. The animals and their food and people to take care of them can easily be got.

707. It was mentioned that only three ships could bring them—the “Ionic,” “Doric,” and “Coptic;” but I did not understand that they positively refused to bring any more?—They positively have.

708. Have the Government taken any steps to move in the matter?—No; that was looked upon as conclusive. I am strongly of opinion that no ship whose chief profit arises from carrying passengers will bring out those animals.

709. And it is impossible to bring them out by sailing-vessels?—I should say it would be impossible. The quantity of pigeons that have to be put on board for the animals is something amazing.

710. Mr. Bayly says that a wire-netting fence is practicable, and would have a good result in North Canterbury. Is it intended by the Government to proceed with that?—There has been no decision formed upon it. The question has only been mooted; but I think it is possible that a subsidy may be given.

711. Have you ascertained how the fence at Waimata originated?—Yes; I can give some more information about that. In the first place, the Government erected three miles of sheep-proof fencing on the boundary between the Districts of Wellington and Hawke's Bay, on the Waimate Stream, which runs through land covered with bush nearly down to the sea. There is no great space between the sea and the edge of the bush. The Government ran a three-mile fence from high-water mark into the bush, enough to stop the sheep crossing the boundary. At that time it was not thought of stopping rabbits. The trustees under the Rabbit Act of 1876 had power to levy a rate up to  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per acre; and they did levy a rate, which produced £1,300. They resolved to erect three miles more of fencing, and import wire for the six miles; and they did order the wire, but