

1080. At the present time Road Boards and County Councils have the power to compel persons to destroy gorse on roads?—Yes; but it ought to be made compulsory.

1081. Have you any suggestion to make with regard to the Rabbit Act?—I would like to suggest that the Government should enable persons to get bi-sulphide of carbon at a cheaper rate than at present. It is fully 8d. per pound.

1082. *Hon. Mr. Holmes.*] Have the Inspectors performed their duties efficiently in your district?—So far as I know, lately, they have done so. I have never had cause to find fault with them.

1083. Would you recommend an increase in the minimum penalty of £1 provided in section 9 for holdings under five hundred acres?—Yes; I think a man would only be too glad to get off for £1 from month to month; £5 ought to be the minimum penalty.

1084. Would not a Board composed of persons immediately interested, and elected from payers of rates, be likely to act more efficiently than the Inspectors?—Yes, I think they would. I would not object so much to trustees so appointed, as to handing over the control to County Councils or similar bodies.

1085. Has the pasture been permanently injured by the rabbits in your district?—No; except where they have cleared the roots out of the land.

1086. Would you recommend that the Government should give a bonus on shipment of skins, without regard to size?—No, I am not in favour of a bonus. I am afraid it would lead to a large expenditure with very little permanent result.

1087. *Mr. McKenzie.*] When the rabbits became a nuisance you took steps to have them destroyed of your own accord?—Yes.

1088. You would have done the same if there was no Rabbit Act or department?—Yes.

1089. And, so far as the department is concerned, you never gave them any trouble?—No.

1090. And they have never given you so much as a notice or found fault with you?—I asked the Inspector to give me one notice in order that he might give a neighbour one at the same time. That is the only one.

1091. And your experience of nine years leads you to believe you can keep down rabbits by systematic work?—Yes.

1092. And if the department says it cannot you do not agree with it?—It is all a matter of expenditure.

1093. Have any of your neighbours bred ferrets?—Not to the same extent.

1094. Can you name any one in the county who has bred ferrets besides yourself?—Not in my district.

1095. Do you think if the other owners of property were doing the same work in the way of breeding ferrets there would be better results?—I think so.

1096. You know, as a fact, that your ferrets are all over the country?—Yes; they have spread very much.

1097. So that adjoining proprietors are getting the benefit of your work?—Yes; that is what I object to. I offered to supply them at cost price; and if I could keep the ferrets to ourselves I would only be too glad.

1098. Can you state how much you have improved the carrying capacity of your run by keeping down rabbits?—By keeping down rabbits and improving the ground, in 1882 we sheared 18,000 sheep; in 1883, 20,500; in 1884, 25,000; in 1885, 27,000; and at present we have about 31,000 or 32,000. We have improved the carrying capacity to the extent of 14,000, and our sheep are in a better condition. Last year we had 9,300 lambs.

1099. What percentage was that?—80 per cent.

1100. The property you manage is a freehold?—Yes.

1101. And most of the adjoining properties are Crown lands?—They are twenty-one years' leases.

1102. Suppose a man had a fourteen years' lease, with only two or three years to expire. At the time he took it rabbits were unknown. Do you think it would be a fair thing for the Government to assist him?—It is a very difficult question to answer. You are supposed to carry your lease through.

1102A. Would it not be an incentive to keep the rabbits down?—No doubt.

1103. Have you in some cases actually cleared your neighbours' land for your own benefit?—In some places I have. My neighbours are only too glad to see my men coming through their ground.

1104. Have you had occasion to draw the Inspector's attention to any country?—Yes; I have drawn his attention several times.

1105. And have they always attended to the matter?—Yes; but it is a mistake to expect a person to draw his attention to this sort of thing: it is a thing I do not like. It is the Inspector's province to see that a person is doing his duty.

1106. In regard to summer-poisoning, you have laid poison at this season?—Yes.

1107. And you believe that by keeping it up you do good?—Yes. I think they will take poison all the year round. In 1882, about December, we killed hundreds in one night. If the poison is well mixed they will pick it out of curiosity.

1108. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What state was the grass in?—There was plenty of feed; they will always pick it whether there is grass or not.

1109. *Mr. Dodson.*] Was the grass dry?—No, it was fairly fresh; we have always plenty of water about.

1110. *Hon. Mr. Menzies.*] Have you much of your land under cultivation?—About fifteen hundred or two thousand acres.

1111. Is that all that has been sown?—Yes.

1112. How lately?—We started about eleven years ago, and have been carrying it on every year with English grasses.