

they are breeding. You do not generally see them. You see the rabbits they have killed. It is very difficult to see the stoats and weasels.

1538. Have the trappers ever caught any stoats and weasels?—I have never heard of their doing so; but they catch ferrets, which are easily caught.

1539. Have you been obliged to take steps against any one for not killing the rabbits?—Yes.

1540. What was the ground of your complaint in that instance?—For not taking efficient steps.

1541. What time of the year was that?—In the spring and summer months.

1542. And you obtained a conviction?—Yes.

1543. Do you think the Act works well in your district?—I think it works satisfactorily.

1544. You have no difficulty in getting a conviction for a breach of the Act?—No.

1545. Have you any unoccupied Crown lands or reserves in your district?—Yes; a few.

1546. Are they badly infested with rabbits?—No.

1547. Do you take steps to prevent rabbits becoming numerous upon them?—Yes; we let contracts for poisoning.

1548. With regard to Native lands unoccupied by Europeans, can you compel Maoris to keep the rabbits down?—Yes; but on lands for which no Crown grant, certificate of title, or memorial of ownership has been issued the Government takes the necessary steps to destroy.

1549. As Inspector, if there were lands of that description in your district would you send men on to eradicate the rabbits?—Yes.

1550. Who would pay the expense?—The Government.

1551. Do they charge it against the Maoris?—That does not come within my knowledge.

1552. How many agents have you under you?—Two.

1553. What are their duties?—To ride round and examine the country, and report to me on the state of the rabbits.

1554. Who appoints and discharges them?—The Inspector.

1555. What means have you of checking their work—simply riding round yourself?—Yes.

1556. Are you satisfied?—I have no cause to suspect that they do not do their duty, nor do I hear complaints made from the landowners.

1557. You would hear such complaints, in all probability, if made?—I think so.

1558. Do you recommend giving a bonus for skins?—That is a difficult question. To do so might act as an inducement to farm rabbits.

1559. *Hon. Mr. Robinson.*] How long have you been in this district?—Three years.

1560. Were the rabbits over the whole district when you first went there?—Yes.

1561. There were none in the Whareama when you went to that district?—There were some; but this is not my district.

1562. Are the rabbits over a greater area now?—Much less.

1563. Is any of the country perfectly clean?—Not perfectly, but they are reduced to a minimum. You may now ride miles and miles and not see a rabbit during the day.

1564. They are over the whole country, but not so thick?—Yes.

1565. As Inspector for the district, what do you do—you live on one spot?—Yes; when I am not travelling.

1566. How far have the rabbits spread from where you live? How far have you to go to see the rabbits?—They are close by—within a mile.

1567. What is the extent of the whole country you are looking over?—I could not say how many miles.

1568. Fifty miles?—I should say so.

1569. Do you ever go that distance?—I generally take a turn every month—not visiting every station, but I keep constantly on the move.

1570. More than once a year?—Yes.

1571. Do you think the system of Inspectors is a good one?—Yes.

1572. How many men have owners on twenty thousand acres?—Nine or ten on the worst part.

1573. Do they all go together?—No.

1574. Is any of your country fenced in with rabbit-proof fence?—Yes.

1575. Does it stop the rabbits?—It stops them from migrating, if looked after. I have known places, however, where they burrow under, and cross by water-courses.

1576. How do you put up the fence?—Netting is put on a post-and-wire fence, and let into the ground.

1577. How?—Straight down, six inches into the ground. In some places I believe it has been bent under.

1578. Do you consider it necessary that the Inspectors, independent of the reports by the agents, should go over the country and see it for themselves?—Most decidedly.

1579. And frequently?—Yes.

1580. You do not know of wire-netting having been bent under the ground of your own knowledge?—No; in my district it is generally put straight down into the ground, rabbits being on both sides of the fence.

1581. And you think a fence can be put up, and, with proper care, keep the country free from rabbits on one side of it?—It would have to be looked after, especially in watercourses and other similar places. It would undoubtedly be a great help in stopping them.

1582. You do not think it would stop them even if kept in good order?—It would to a certain extent, but there might be an odd one that would get through.

1583. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Have the rabbits increased in the Wairarapa during the last summer?—They increased during the dry season, but by ploughing a furrow, and turning a sod, and putting down poison they were reduced.