

225. Do you know that there is a provision in the Act against persons carrying rabbits?—No, I was not aware.

226. The penalty for such an offence is a fine of £50, but no imprisonment. Now, what would be the good of fining a swagger £50, because you cannot send him to gaol?—For my part, I do not think the rabbits are carried over by swaggers. I fancy the Maori is more to blame.

227. Now, do not you think there should be a penalty as well as imprisonment for persons carrying rabbits about the country?—Certainly; the class of men who take rabbits are not moneyed men.

228. The Inspector in your country says the rabbits are very numerous: how do you account for that?—Because a great many of the settlers have slackened off keeping the rabbits down during the summer.

229. With their poisoning?—No.

230. You have been a great deal about lately, but you have seen no rabbits about Akiteo?—No.

231. There must have been good poisoning done there?—Yes; I should say so.

232. Does the Act work well? Do you find it works satisfactorily?—Yes.

233. Have you had much experience with Rabbit Boards?—No.

234. Is it true one is being formed in your district?—Yes; I believe so. I do not trouble much about it myself. I should be in favour of the formation of a Rabbit Board, and I should go in for importing ferrets, stoats, and weasels. I think a Board, working together with the Inspector, would do good work.

235. Would they carry out the duties at present carried out by Inspectors?—All I can say is I think the Inspectors would be better by having help from some one.

236. Then, do you think the district Inspector should have a seat on the Board?—Yes.

237. Then, you are of opinion it would be a good thing to form Rabbit Boards with rating powers only, so that you might get a subsidy for getting the natural enemy?—Quite so.

238. That the Board would have nothing to do except with regard to turning out the natural enemies?—Yes. I should be satisfied with that. Such an arrangement would relieve the Board of a lot of responsibility. I believe it would work very well, provided, of course, good officers were obtained.

239. *Mr. Buchanan.*] With regard to the fence between Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay, there is a gate next to the beach: is that sometimes left open?—No; the gate will not stay open at all. No rabbit can get through, and there is a man who looks after the gate, and he sees it is kept greased so that the latch closes.

240. But the rabbits could get through at night?—No. There are no rabbits there to get through. The man who looks after the gate keeps dogs, and there is never a rabbit seen.

241. But, taking the whole line of fence, do you conceive it possible that there may be openings where rabbits could get through?—Of course, if a tree fell across it would make an opening.

242. Some time ago you said the rabbits in your part were very scarce; that you only saw them in one's and two's?—Yes.

243. And they have spread considerably lately, and it will only be a question of time for them to get on the other side of the fence?—Yes; unless they are checked.

244. Then, there should be men on both sides of the fence looking after them?—Yes.

245. It would just be a question of time for the rabbits on the north side to be as bad as on the south, unless looked after?—That is my opinion.

246. You know, do you not, that in several centres of the Hawke's Bay District tame rabbits were let loose some years ago?—Yes.

247. And they have not been increasing to any extent, have they?—Yes, I think so.

248. Do you know that there are a few rabbits on the Kidnappers?—Yes; plenty.

249. But they were the progeny of the tame ones?—That might be so.

250. Would you be prepared to recommend that rabbit-netting should be compulsory?—Well, I should like it myself very much. It would suit me. I should very much like my neighbours to be compelled to put it up. It would be, I think, a good thing for the country.

251. Have you pictured to yourself the probable cost of such a thing if it became law?—No; but I know it cost me £200 a mile in some of my rough country.

252. *Mr. Dodson.*] Have you any idea how the small settler would be affected by making it a legal fence?—I should think it would fall very heavy on him.

253. You do not speak strongly for it?—I would speak strongly for it from my own point of view. I know it would be a hardship to some of my neighbours.

254. *Hon. the Chairman.*] You think it would be a good thing if the wire fencing were made legal?—Yes.

255. But I understand you to say it would be a hardship to the smaller man?—Yes.

256. *Mr. Duncan.*] I believe there is a considerable area of Crown lands joining your property?—Yes.

257. And you think there was not sufficient care taken there to keep down the rabbits?—They poisoned once a year, but nothing afterwards.

258. What is the character of the land?—It is mostly light bush and scrub, with small openings or clearings through it; manuka and heavy bush further back.

259. *Hon. Mr. Pharazyn.*] Is the country occupied at the back?—Yes; partly. There are about 100,000 acres not occupied. It is occupied about fourteen miles up the Aohanga. Further up the valley the country gets rougher, and it is not occupied at all.

260. *Mr. Dodson.*] Is the country at the extreme back suitable for settlement?—Yes; very suitable indeed.

261. Have you ever known rabbits to take up on scrub country?—Yes; but I think where you have heavy bush timber you will not find many rabbits.