

the market is also taken into account the case for the rabbit is made infinitely worse, for here they give no return whatever for their keep, and not even a lame economic excuse can be put forward to justify their continued existence. It must be remembered, moreover, that as a rule the landholder receives none of the return (if any) from the rabbits he feeds. While it is impossible to arrive at any approximate estimate of the number of rabbits in the country at any time, we have only to consider that their number at all times runs into millions in order to realize roughly the extent of the loss for which they are responsible.

DAMAGE TO PASTURE, AND DISEASE.

The value of the grass rabbits consume without giving anything approaching an adequate return does not by any means complete the case against them. In some districts they have done serious and in many cases practically irreparable damage to large areas of pasture. They are connoisseurs in the selection of locality and vegetation, congregating in the warmest localities in infested areas, where they eat out and in many cases totally destroy the most succulent vegetation, leaving the colder land and the coarser pasture to stock. In some localities where they were once numerous, but where their number has since been reduced to a minimum, some of the pasture has taken from ten to twenty years to recover from the effect of their ravages, and much of it will probably never fully recover its former productivity. Their excrement and urine are particularly obnoxious to other animals, and stock thrive badly on pasture which is fouled by them, even when the quantity and quality of the grasses appear otherwise sufficient and satisfactory. Where they have been numerous over an extended period the pasture retains their taint for a long time after they have ceased to pollute it.

Rabbits are so susceptible to internal parasitic affections that in some districts the mortality among them due to this form of disease has been found sufficient in itself to keep their numbers low for considerable periods. The writer has had experience in localities where approximately 50 per cent. of the mature rabbits were found to be affected with hydatid cysts.

RABBIT AS AN ARTICLE OF FOOD.

The poor and mangy condition of the majority of the several thousand dogs which were formerly kept in Canterbury and Otago for destroying rabbits, and which were exclusively fed on the latter, supplied an excellent gauge of the value of rabbit as an article of food. The condition in which these dogs were usually seen was not due to natural unthriftiness or want of proper care, but principally to the inferior food-value of rabbit, and in a lesser degree to the