

103. What, in your opinion, would be the effect of introducing natural enemies; and what animals would you suggest?—That is a ticklish point, that of natural enemies. I think if those who talk of introducing natural enemies knew as much about weasels, and stoats, and polecats as I do, they would never think of introducing them. If the Committee told me I could have a dozen weasels or a hundred rabbits on my land, I would say turn out the rabbits. That will show the dread I have of them. Weasels and stoats would soon prove a nuisance. Ferrets might be useful for large burrows, where poison could not be very well introduced. I was told lately of a man who caught a rabbit and attached dynamite to it, and then put it in the burrow, which was blown to atoms; and now I hear he is going to take more dynamite for the same purpose.

104. You say weasels, and stoats, and ferrets would do a good deal of mischief? What is your reason for thinking so?—Because I have known them to do a deal of mischief in the old country.

105. *Hon. Captain Fraser.*] Do they kill lambs?—I have known and seen such instances. I have known stoats to suck young lambs. Turkeys, and geese, and fowls they would go to. They will destroy anything where they can get blood. I believe if a man was lying helpless in the road they would suck his blood.

106. *The Chairman.*] And to polecats and ferrets would you apply the same remarks?—No; I would use ferrets in a domestic way, but would never let them go loose.

107. There would be danger from ferrets, if wild?—No doubt about it. They have many of the propensities of the stoat. I remember, when young, putting my hand into a rabbits'-nest and pulling it out with a stoat hanging to my fingers' end. Those who have once handled a stoat never forget it. Their smell is so bad that rabbits will not go again in a hole a stoat has been in. I do not think polecats could be got very well. They are very scarce in England. I only saw two or three all the time I was there. You can get ferrets in any numbers; but I would never think of turning them out.

108. *Mr. Collins.* What do you think ferrets would do if turned out?—After the rabbits were done, they would kill anything they could get hold of. They would eat lambs, and kill geese, and turkeys, and game. They would kill all that destroy the insects, and then we should have a nuisance of grasshoppers and other insects, which would be quite as bad as the rabbits.

109. *Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*] What is the size of your property?—3,000 acres, most of which is cleared. There is not much danger from rabbits in the solid bush. They are worst in blackthorns, because you cannot get the dogs in. Rabbits will not live in the real bush, because they will not eat the fern and those sort of things.

110. *Hon. Mr. Martin.*] How about their being in the Seventy-Mile Bush?—They follow the road, and eat the grass on the road-side.

111. *The Chairman.*] Has your district been under the Rabbit Nuisance Act?—It was suggested to bring that Act into force in Wairarapa West County. I am a Councillor in that county, and I opposed it being in force in the riding I represent, and it is not in force there, but is in the rest of the county. I do not like the rating clause. I do not think it right that a man who kills his rabbits should pay for the killing of them for a man who does not.

112. Does the Act work satisfactorily?—I say no; because it is invariably found that the men who have most rabbits are Trustees, and do not like to touch one another. A man affected with any complaint does not like to fall out with any neighbour who has got the same disease. That is the case with the Trustees. With that, and with the rating, the Act is not working well. I consider it is not satisfactory.

113. What is your chief objection to the Act?—To the rating; and the Inspectors ought to be appointed by the county.

114. You consider that those who kill rabbits should not be rated to keep the rabbits off the ground of other people?—Exactly so. The rate does not encourage the killing of rabbits. It encourages a good many people not to kill them.

115. On whom should the onus rest of proving that efficient steps have been taken to remedy the evil? You know that the difficulty in the Scab Act was in proving whether a man had done his duty or not. Should the onus of proof rest with the Inspector that a man had not done his duty, or should the man have to prove that he had?—I would allow that to the Inspector. A man would never lay an information against himself. I should have Inspectors and not Trustees, and the Inspectors should be appointed by the county.

116. Do you think Inspectors should have power to enter on private property and destroy rabbits?—No doubt. If he had not power to enter he would not have power to lay an information. He should have power to go on the land and to kill rabbits, after proper notice, charging the cost to the owner; not to have a rating clause.

117. Would you recommend increasing the minimum penalty? Yes, to £20. The present law, with a minimum of £1, is of no use at all. The maximum should be double the minimum at least. People only laugh at the idea of being fined £1, and saving £20.

118. Do you think repressive legislation would be best administered by the Government, the County Councils, or the Trustees?—Under Inspectors appointed by the County Councils.

119. *Mr. Bastings.*] Do you not think County Councils would be open to the same charge as the Trustees—that members would not proceed against themselves?—I would leave proceedings to the Inspectors.

120. Yes; but the Inspectors would be under the control of the County Councils, and possibly the Council would pass a resolution not to enforce the Act?—I think the General Government should have the power to force them to.

121. *Mr. Collins.*] You would leave the ultimate power to the General Government?—Yes; but the counties should do all the work.

122. *The Chairman.*] You would have it done by the County Council in the first place, and, if that body did not carry out the Act, the General Government to step in?—Yes.

123. You think that clause 19 of the Act meets the case?—Yes, I think it does.

124. Can you suggest any means of abating the nuisance on Crown lands and reserves?—Well, the only plan that I can see is to have the land either occupied, or the Crown to destroy rabbits. The