

103. You cannot speak much about them?—So far as I can tell, I do not think they are very satisfactory.

104. Do you find that the poisoned wheat has killed any of your sheep?—None at all, so far as we know.

105. You are acquainted with the present Rabbit Act?—I know there is such an Act.

106. Do you think its provisions are satisfactory?—No, I do not think so. I do not think the Government take sufficient precautions in regard to their own country to destroy the rabbits. I had to give up a hundred thousand acres in consequence of that. The land became so rough and infested that when the lease fell through I did not renew it.

107. When was that?—I think it fell through in 1882 or 1883.

108. What has become of that land now?—I believe it is lying idle.

109. Have any steps been taken to kill the rabbits upon that land?—Not so far as I know.

110. Was any engagement entered into with you at any time to clear the place of rabbits?—No.

111. Is it very difficult country?—Yes; the country I have thrown up is very difficult. It would be impossible to eradicate them altogether, but you might keep them down within reasonable bounds.

112. Have you at any time received instructions from the Inspector under the Act to kill rabbits?—If we have it is a long time ago. The Inspector has been thoroughly satisfied with our endeavours; and, indeed, it has been to our advantage to do all we could. During the last three years the rabbits have been reduced to a tenth of what they were.

113. The Inspector does visit you occasionally?—Yes.

114. And he is fully satisfied?—Yes.

115. And you think he performs his work well?—I believe so. I believe he is a very good man.

116. You say you are not satisfied with the present Act because it does not provide for the clearing of the waste lands of the Crown?—That is the principal reason.

117. Have you any objections to the Act?—No, I do not think so.

118. Do you think the present system of keeping the control over the Rabbit Department in the Government offices here is a right one, or would it be better to depute the authority to the local bodies?—I should say the local bodies have a better opportunity of knowing the circumstances of the various districts and how to deal with them.

119. Would there be an objection to the Government issuing instructions to the local bodies and leaving them to carry out those instructions, the Government keeping the control over the local bodies?—I think that would be a very fair way of doing it. I think the Government should have the supreme control over the whole affair.

120. Have rabbiters been employed in your district to any extent?—Yes; we have now about a hundred of our own men.

121. But have any been put on by instructions from the Inspectors?—No.

122. Have you tried dogs?—Yes; also guns and fumigation, and every other possible means.

123. When is the best time for poisoning?—We do it all the year round with the exception of six months. We begin in April and go on till September.

124. Do you find that the rabbits will take the poison in the summer?—In some places. It depends upon the nature of the country.

125. Then, if you were to eat down the country and put down bare poison they would take it?—Yes; they would not take it at all if they could get green food.

126. What kind of poison do you use?—Brown sugar and phosphorus.

127. Do you get it in New Zealand?—We import it.

128. The Government do not assist you in importing the phosphorus?—Not in the slightest degree.

129. Do you think the Government should assist you by importing it?—Yes, certainly. The Government might make some arrangements to ship it, about which there is some difficulty.

130. Have you tried arsenic?—Yes; but phosphorus is the best. I may mention that we get about four hundred thousand skins a year.

131. Do you think the offering of a bonus by the Government for the skins should be adopted?—It is the only equitable way that I can see of meeting the case generally. It would cost them a good deal of money, of course.

132. Suppose the Government were to offer to buy the skins at 2d. per skin, and the owner were to subsidize that amount with a little more?—They would have to do so. I do not think the skins pay us 35 per cent. of the cost of destruction.

133. Then you have no reason for thinking that the present Act should be so amended as to give greater power to compel persons to kill rabbits?—I think it sufficient for that at the present time. The only thing I complain of is that the Government itself does not take sufficient steps to clear its lands.

134. *Mr. McKenzie.*] You say you are satisfied with the way the department has been carrying out the inspection in your district?—Yes.

135. What is the name of your inspector?—Mr. Macdonald, I believe.

136. Does he force other people in your neighbourhood to do their work?—He treats us all alike, so far as I know.

137. Have you done the good work you seem to have done on your property from any compulsion on the part of the Inspector?—No; I should have done the same work if the Inspector had not been there at all. I kept two or three inspectors of my own.

138. Mr. Macdonald is considered a very superior sort of man in his particular department, is he not?—I do not know.