

2102. Do you think, by a system of wire-netting you could subdivide the country, and eat one part down bare, and then poison?—People do that, and it is a great help.

2103. You think that by such a system you would be able to get at the rabbits all through the year?—I think so; and that is why I recommend it if the people like to put it up.

2104. How far does your district run up the East Coast?—To the boundary of Hawke's Bay.

2105. Are the rabbits increasing in your country?—Not at present.

2106. Do you know anything of the success of the fence at Waimata?—Yes; it has proved successful. There are a few rabbits on the Wairarapa side of the fence; and very often the rabbits go up to the fence and it stops them. The agent then comes up and kills them.

2107. Do you know the country through which it is proposed to prolong this fence between Hawke's Bay and the Wairarapa?—Yes.

2108. Are rabbits likely to travel up that fence?—No, I do not think so. What I recommended last spring was that this fence should be erected to a point where they would not be likely to go round.

2109. If the fence is run into a dense bush there is very little chance of rabbits going round it?—It is according to the locality. The erection of a rabbit-proof fence will undoubtedly tend to check the spread.

2110. What salaries do the rabbit agents receive?—From 12s. 6d. to 15s. per day, and only the days on which they are at work, and they have to find their own horses and everything.

2111. Is that sufficient to get absolutely responsible men?—No. Some men do not make more than £15 to £18 per month.

2112. Do their duties take them much to hotel life?—Sometimes; but often an agent stops at a station.

2113. Is the rabbit agent always welcome at a station?—Yes.

2114. Do you think the payment is sufficient to get a man fit for such a responsible position?—I think it is little enough, and it would be better if they were paid so much per month.

2115. *Mr. Buchanan* (after reading an extract from the report of a similar Committee held two years ago, referring to the fitness of certain officers employed under the Act).] You would not feel empowered to dismiss or suspend an agent for misconducting himself, such as getting periodically drunk and so forth?—I should feel justified in suspending him and reporting him.

2116. Do you think your position is a satisfactory one in this sense?—I think the Colonial Secretary would support me if I showed him clearly the circumstances.

2117. Do you not think you should have the power of dismissal upon misconduct?—I think, if it was shown it was through misconduct it would be well to give that power; but there is a way of getting it done by reporting it to head-quarters, and I think the department would support the Inspector.

SIR,—

Wellington, 9th June, 1886.

May I be allowed to make the following addition to my evidence given before the Rabbit Nuisance Committee to-day.

I think that the Board or the Inspector should have the option of prohibiting trapping in any rabbit district.

Trapping is very useful where rabbits exist in isolated patches, but should be strictly prohibited where natural enemies abound.

I should also like to say, with reference to the Hon. Mr. Robinson's question as to whether it would be advisable to procure some experienced men from Australia: Upon further consideration I do not think that it would be necessary, because we have plenty of men in this country who have had quite as much experience as the Australians; and, further, that the conditions as regards climate and country are so very different to those existing in Australia, that I think our own men, having an intimate knowledge of the country, are far better fitted to cope with the pest than strangers would be. If it was thought advisable, it would be better to send a man over to Australia to see and report upon the various modes of treatment in that country.

I have, &c.,

Hon. G. R. Johnson,
Chairman, Rabbit Nuisance Committee.

REGINALD FOSTER,
Inspector of Sheep.

SHEEP.

FRIDAY, 18TH JUNE, 1886.

Mr. ORBELL examined.

1. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Can you tell the Committee whether complaints have been made as to the administration of the sections in the Sheep Act relating to lice?—There have been a few complaints.

2. Did you bring a case in the Forty-Mile Bush into the Magistrate's Court lately?—No; Mr Drummond did.

3. Have you made a general inspection of flocks in your particular part of the district to see whether any lice can be found in those flocks?—Yes.

4. All the flocks?—Almost all.

5. In the event of your finding lice in one or two sheep in a flock during the present month—scarcely noticeable—would you consider it your duty to give the owner notice within a month under one of the sections of the amended Act?—I think, so far as the Act goes, we are bound to do so. I think the Act should give the Inspector discretionary power, as I think it is unnecessary in all cases to have the sheep dipped; but, according to the Act, we are obliged to carry it out—we have no discretionary power.

6. Suppose you made the discovery during lambing-time—would you do so then?—I should