

Hon. Mr. SUTHERLAND, Senator, called and examined.

*By the Chairman :*

Q. How far north and west have you been in your country? A. I have not been north at all. I have not been further north than the mouth of the Red River. That is about the furthest I have been north in any part of that country.

Q. Of the present natural foods, are there any that, with proper instructions to the Indians, and to the new white settlers, could be preserved for future use? A. I do not know exactly. Reference was made yesterday to the rabbit. I suppose it would be possible to preserve rabbits for a certain time, but I do not know; their flesh seems to be very tender, and it is a question whether it would keep for any great length of time.

Q. The Hon. Mr. Girard mentioned yesterday that he had now at home some smoked rabbits. I know that other meats in that country are smoked. I have noticed the Indians myself preserving meat in that way, and where they are kept away from the dampness of the ground, they are cached safely for a long time? A. I am afraid that the meat of rabbits would not be of very great utility, because it would be merely two years out of seven that we could expect a superabundance of those animals.

*By the Honorable Mr. Almon :*

Q. How is that? A. There is no doubt at all that they die off every seven years until there is scarcely one left.

Q. And without any appreciable cause? A. From some disease, of course. You will find them lying every few yards dead, once the disease sets in, and in the course of three years you will scarcely see a rabbit left.

Q. What kind of rabbits are they? What we call rabbits are a variety of small hare. Are they the English rabbit or a modification of the English hare? A. I do not know; I have never seen an English rabbit.

Q. The common rabbit? A. I have never seen any of them, so I have not the means of saying.

Q. Do those rabbits burrow in the ground or live on the surface? A. They live entirely on the surface.

Q. You have only one variety? A. I have never seen but one kind. I believe there is a different species in the west, towards the Rocky Mountains, but they are very scarce.

*By the Honorable Mr. McInnes :*

Q. You mean the large jack rabbit? A. Yes.

*By the Chairman :*

Q. You have mentioned, and I think quite correctly, that there are periods in which the rabbits are reported to be entirely absent from the country. The Indians say so, and that is about the time you speak of—two years of plenty and five years of comparative absence. Would it be possible, supposing after two years of plenty, and when they have died off in the manner you have described, if they were reintroduced from some healthy district they would propagate rapidly? A. They might possibly, but it would be a matter of experiment of course.

*By the Honorable Mr. Almon :*

Q. What are their natural enemies? A. Hawks and foxes are their principal enemies.

*By the Chairman :*

Q. The disease seems to be epidemic? A. Yes, it spreads all over. I shot one, the only one I ever did shoot, during a time of scarcity. I happened to come across a couple and shot one of them; and I found three or four very large bugs—about the size of the end of my little finger—about the neck. Whether those bugs were the cause of the disease, I do not know; but I had opportunities of examining others, which I found lying dead, and they had no such thing on them.

Q. The witness of yesterday, Mr. Forget, mentioned that the cause of death seems to be a swelling about the neck, and he also made allusion to a bug? A. I could not say from the cursory examination I made of the one I killed. I found several, and examined one to see if there were any of those bugs upon it.