

Q. Do they burrow in the snow? A. They make tracks in the snow, in winter, and in very severe weather they are found sitting quite still under the thickest trees. Bush fires destroy vastly more rabbits than the Indians. A fire that runs over the space of a county destroys nearly all the rabbits within that space; they cannot get away. Some of the larger animals escape by flying before the fire and getting into the water, or getting into sheltered places until the fire passes over, but the smaller ones are all burnt.

By the Chairman:

Q. Would the annual fires have anything to do with the occasional scarcity of rabbits in the prairie country? A. They might, and perhaps the birds of prey and foxes might destroy them.

Q. Would you give the Committee a list of animals and birds that prey on the rabbits? A. Foxes, wolves, lynxes, martens, hawks and eagles.

Q. Supposing that the rabbit was re-introduced in the denuded districts, you would suggest the protection of the animal—the precaution of not allowing them to be killed during the summer? A. Yes; I think there is no necessity for killing them in the summer, because the Indians in the bush can get their food otherwise, and on the plains I do not think they are necessary to the support of the Indians in the summer, and they might as well leave them alone.

Q. In winter, when they are in great abundance, is there any means by which their flesh could be preserved for future use? A. I think that drying and smoking alone would cure them sufficiently for the Indian palate, as the Indians already smoke and dry fish, birds and animals of all kinds. It is a process that they understand.

Q. How long would that process preserve the flesh of the rabbit, if kept in an ordinary dry place? A. I should think for a year.

Q. Would you tell us what other of the natural food products can be preserved in that way? A. Almost any kind. I have seen the Indians preserve the flesh of the deer and bear—any animal that they get—by simply drying it in the summer and smoking it over a fire. It becomes very hard, and requires to be soaked in water to be made soft and palatable again. But they preserve geese, ducks, and the leaner meat of any animal that they are in the habit of killing.

Q. What is the process that you would recommend for the preservation of fish—such means as are at the hands of the Indians or whites in the places where fish are caught? A. If they are allowed to catch the fish just before the winter comes on, as white people do now in large numbers, and just hang them up, they can preserve them for six months. The Hudson's Bay Company's people are often obliged to help the Indians by giving them fish preserved in this way. They call them "hung-by-tail," from the manner in which they are preserved, and keep them in large quantities for winter, and if the Indians were half as provident as white men they could do the same thing. They are caught by thousands while on the spawning beds, it is true, but where they exist in inexhaustible quantities there is no objection to doing that for a time.

Q. What could a family of four or five, living beside one of those lakes, do if they were provided with three gill nets, say at a cost of \$1.75 for the three? A. I should think they could easily put up five thousand fish.

Q. What would the average weight of the fish be? A. They would weigh about three pounds each. It is quite a common thing, when an Indian has preserved nothing for himself, to go to a Hudson's Bay Company's man and ask for "a stick of fish." These fish are hung by the tails from a stick, and there are ten to a stick. When the fish are caught they are punched through the tails with a three-cornered, pointed instrument, and put on a stick by the tails and hung up on poles, so as to keep them out of the reach of dogs. They freeze in the night, and keep better in that position than in any other way. The moisture drains out towards the mouth, and there is nothing that permeates the fish—that would destroy it—as if it were lying on its side. Nothing else is done to preserve the fish.

Q. In what portions of the country could these large quantities of fish be caught by the Indians, and be bought from them by Indian agents and transported to other