

ACCLIMATISATION SOCIETY. (Extract from the *Press*.)

THE ordinary monthly meeting of the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society was held yesterday afternoon at the Commercial Hotel. There were present: Hon. J. T. Peacock (President), Messrs. J. C. Boys, P. Cunningham, A. Carrick, A. Fergusson, W. B. Perceval, W. F. Warner, and H. R. Webb. An apology was accepted for the absence of Mr. Spackman. A letter was read from Mr. Warner, asking for six months' leave of absence. The council granted his request.

The chairman reported the result of the sub-committee's visit to the fish-house at the ponds, after which it was resolved that the sum of £20 should be expended in additions and improvements.

A letter was read from the Ashburton society, in which they still adhere to their desire that the game season should open on the 29th March. The council decided to recommend Government to gazette the 29th March as the opening and the 31st July as the closing day of the season for shooting game.

Mr. Tibbs, fishmonger, interviewed the council. Having noticed that the council were about to consider the question of closing Lake Ellesmere, he attended the meeting to protest against such action. He stated that the small fish which were caught in the lake came from the sea; and he suggested that a law should be strictly enforced forbidding the use of nets having meshes of less than 4½ in.

After Mr. Tibbs had finished and had retired, Mr. J. C. Boys moved the following motion, of which he had given notice: "That this council petition the Governor to close Lake Ellesmere to all net-fishing for the next two years, on account of the flounders and the salmon experiment." He adduced a number of reasons in support of his motion. For many years the members of the society had doubtless noticed that the flounders, which were almost the only fish sent to market by the fishermen engaged at the lake, had been getting smaller and smaller, until now the fishermen could only get their living by transgressing the law—that was, that the largest flounders that they now caught were scarcely worth sending to the market, and the number of smaller ones which were inevitably caught died before the men could possibly return them to the water. The consequence of this would be that in a year or two the fishermen would find their means of livelihood at Lake Ellesmere gone. Mr. Boys pointed out particularly that the council of the acclimatisation society would have made a move several years ago in the present direction had it not had some consideration for the fishermen engaged at the lake. The council did not wish to injure them or their means of livelihood; but the matter now had reached such a serious point that it was in the interest of the fishermen, as well as in that of the general public, that the lake should be closed. There was another very strong reason why this should be done immediately. The council had liberated a great many healthy salmon into the Selwyn, and there were better prospects of the experiment in this river being more successful than in any other. At the mouths of the larger rivers the salmon's enemies were so numerous and so ravenous that not one fish in a thousand could escape. In Lake Ellesmere there were very few enemies, and in all probability the salmon would get sufficient salt water along the eastern side of the lake to enable it to grow and become vigorous. The only way, then, to protect the fish would be to have a stop put to all net-fishing. The late trial at the Resident Magistrate's Court clearly showed the danger fish were in from this kind of fishing. It was also shown that there was a line of two miles of netting set opposite the mouths of the Selwyn River, and it was impossible under such circumstances for the salmon to escape. He repeated, in conclusion, that it was evident that to close the lake to all net-fishing for two years would ultimately result in a benefit to both the fishermen and the public.

Mr. Carrick seconded the motion, to which Mr. Cunningham moved, as an amendment, "That the words 'one year' be substituted for 'two years.'" Mr. Fergusson seconded the amendment, which, as well as the motion, elicited some discussion. The amendment, upon being put, was lost, and the motion carried.

Mr. Fitzroy, secretary to the Hawke's Bay society, wrote asking for a nest of humble-bees. The letter was received, and the secretary was instructed to reply that a nest had already been sent to Mr. Williams, of Hastings, which it was hoped would be sufficient to supply the district.

The council then adjourned, to meet again on the 28th March.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to the HONORARY SECRETARY, Canterbury Acclimatisation Society.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington 7th April, 1888.

I am directed by the Minister having charge of this department to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th ultimo, addressed to the Colonial Secretary, forwarding copy of a resolution of the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society petitioning the Governor to close Lake Ellesmere to all net-fishing for the next two years, on account of the flounders and the salmon experiment; and, in reply, I am to inform you that the Minister has carefully considered this application, and, having regard to the magnitude of the other interests involved, he regrets that he cannot comply with the society's request, and recommend His Excellency to make the necessary regulations to give effect to such request.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. Secretary,
Canterbury Acclimatisation Society, Christchurch.

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,
Assistant Secretary.

The Hon. Sir J. HALL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Hororata, Canterbury, 7th March, 1888.

I have the honour to forward for the consideration of the Government a letter from Mr. Durant, of Leeston, on a subject which is of serious importance to a considerable number of my constituents.

They understand that the Government has been requested by the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society to put a stop, for two years, to the fishing in Lake Ellesmere, which has been carried on