

to state that the society has been informed that, having regard to the magnitude of the other interests involved, the Minister is unable to comply with their request.

I have, &c.,

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,
Assistant Secretary.

Sir John Hall, K.C.M.G., M.H.R., &c., Hororata, Canterbury.

Mr. A. M. JOHNSON to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Troutdale Farm, Opawa, Christchurch, 20th March, 1888.

Having been engaged in the introduction and acclimatisation of both salmon and trout in the colony for the last twenty years, perhaps the following remarks may prove acceptable with reference to the two reasons put forward by the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society why the lake should be closed for fishing purposes, namely:—

1. "That continued fishing in the lake may interfere with the acclimatisation of salmon." Even if the temperature of the water in the lake is such as to afford a fair prospect of the acclimatisation of English salmon they would still have many natural enemies to contend against. On this point the late Dr. F. Buckland wrote: "With respect to the numerous salt-water predaceous fish infesting the mouths of rivers, you will no doubt find it desirable to employ some means to frighten away, by use of nets or other appliances, the enemies of the salmon from the river set apart as a nursery." It will thus be seen that the local fishermen are in a position to render most important service by keeping in check the salmon enemies, and it would be to their present interest and future benefit to do so, unless, by injudicious restrictions, the fishermen are brought to regard the salmon as a source of trouble and vexation, and the indirect means of preventing them earning an honest livelihood.

2. "That it interferes with the breeding of the trout which has been introduced into rivers discharging into the lake." It is only under exceptional circumstances that trout would deposit their eggs in the lake, and still more unlikely that the eggs would ever hatch. The instinct of both trout and salmon leads them to select the clear gravelly upper shallows of rivers in which to deposit their spawn. The trout that would find their way into the lake would be chiefly the large overgrown ones—the worst enemies to their own offspring—and the salmon; and, as the larger trout are difficult to capture by angling, their removal by netting, especially of large male fish, would conduce to more successful breeding, and be an advantage to both lake and rivers.

I have, &c.,

A. M. JOHNSON.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to Mr. A. M. JOHNSON.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 27th March, 1888.

I have been directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, addressed to the Colonial Secretary, stating the reasons why you think net-fishing should be allowed in Lake Ellesmere.

I have, &c.,

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,
Assistant Secretary.

A. M. Johnson, Esq., Troutdale Farm, Opawa, Christchurch.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS to the Hon. Major ATKINSON.

MY DEAR ATKINSON,—

Christchurch, 2nd March, 1888.

Please forward the enclosed to the Minister who deals with such matters; I do not know if it is Hislop:—

A deputation of fishermen came to me to-day saying—(1) That the step proposed by the acclimatisation society would destroy their living by fishing at the lake; (2) that 250 men were engaged and twenty boats worth £15 to £30 each, besides contingent carts and horses; (3) that Government would lose from £1 to £1 10s. per day for carriage of fish. They asked if they had better send a counter-petition setting out their case, and I said Yes.

Yours, &c.,

E. C. J. STEVENS.

Messrs. HARPER and Co. to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Hereford Street, Christchurch, 3rd March, 1888.

We have the honour to inform you that a petition is about to be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society for the closing of Lake Ellesmere to all net-fishing for a period of two years.

The petition, if granted, will have the effect of depriving a large number of fishermen in the Ellesmere district of their present means of subsistence, and we have received instructions to present a counter-petition on their behalf. We trust, therefore, that no steps will be taken in the matter of the acclimatisation society's petition until the fishermen have had an opportunity of laying before His Excellency their views upon the question.

We have, &c.,

HARPER AND Co.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Messrs. HARPER and Co. to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Hereford Street, Christchurch, 28th March, 1888.

Referring to our letter of the 3rd instant, we now have the honour to forward herewith a petition from the fishermen of the Lake Ellesmere district, praying that His Excellency the Governor may not see fit to close Lake Ellesmere to net-fishing, in terms of the petition of the