

justice to owners of property and residents in the Ellesmere district, who for many years have looked on the lake as their fishing-grounds. And we are of opinion that closing the lake against net-fishing, as proposed by the acclimatisation society, for two years will in no way increase the supply of flounders. We also consider the different clauses in this petition to be true and fair.

T. W. DURANT and 133 others.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, Marine Department, to Messrs. HARPER AND Co.

GENTLEMEN,—

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 28th ultimo, addressed to the Colonial Secretary, forwarding a petition from 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 Canterbury Acclimatisation Society, and, in reply, I am to state that the society has been informed that the Minister, having regard to the magnitude of the interests involved, is unable to advise His Excellency to make the regulations necessary to give effect to the request made by the society.

At the same time I am to request that you will point out to your clients that their conduct will have material effect in connection with any future proposal of this kind, as, if the existing regulations are not strictly carried out by them—which, I regret to say, has not been done in the past by all—the question will no doubt have to be dealt with again.

I have, &c.,

LEWIS H. B. WILSON,  
Assistant Secretary.

Messrs. Harper and Co., Solicitors, &c., Hereford Street, Christchurch.

Mr. W. H. SPACKMAN to the SECRETARY, Marine Department.

DEAR SIR,—

213, Hereford Street, Christchurch, 17th April, 1888.

I am instructed to inform you that a meeting was held at Christchurch on the 12th instant (copy report sent herewith), consisting of the acclimatisation society, the fish-vendors in Christchurch, and the fishermen on Lake Ellesmere, and that at the said meeting the following resolution was put to the meeting: "That the Government be requested to fix the size of the set-nets to be used for catching flounders in Lake Ellesmere at 5in., drag-nets at 4½in., and the nets to be used for taking mullet or herring at 2½in., measured in the usual way, such regulations to come into force at the expiration of twelve months from the 12th day of April, 1888."

The above resolution was carried unanimously, with the exception of the drag-nets being 4½in., which three fishermen only desired should be 4in. With regard to the mullet- or herring-nets being 2½in., I would point out that twenty nets with a mesh of that description are at present allowed on the lake, and that it will probably be inadvisable to allow two descriptions of nets so widely differing in mesh to be used. That is, however, a matter for consideration by the Government. The rest of resolution is so evidently to the advantage both of the public and the fishermen that the acclimatisation society is desirous that regulations to that effect should be gazetted forthwith.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington.

W. H. SPACKMAN.

A CONFERENCE between the acclimatisation society and fishermen employed on Lake Ellesmere, as to the mesh of the nets, was held yesterday at 2 p.m. The members of the acclimatisation society present were the Hon. J. T. Peacock (President), Messrs. Spackman, J. Struthers, Williams, W. B. Perceval, Boys, Farr, and Dr. Frankish. An apology for non-attendance was received from Mr. P. Cunningham. Messrs. Husband, Elliott, and seven others represented the fishermen.

The Hon. J. T. Peacock said that there was no intention on the part of the acclimatisation society to act arbitrarily. Therefore they had asked them to come and meet them that day to discuss what was the best for the fishing interest. The acclimatisation society only wanted to see the fish protected in the future. They therefore met there that day not as the acclimatisation society, but as those who wanted to see fishing prosper.

Mr. Spackman said he desired to ask the fishermen present that day to dismiss from their minds any idea that they wanted to increase the size of the mesh unduly. He wanted to see the acclimatisation society, as representing the public, and the fishermen come together to discuss the matter. They knew that the flounders coming to Christchurch were very small. Now, under the *Gazette* Proclamation of 1884 the size of the net for flounders was fixed at not less than 4½in. He understood that this was the size now used by the fishermen on Lake Ellesmere. In the new regulations of the 10th January, 1888, the mesh of the nets used in Lake Ellesmere was brought down to 4in. He did not know how this had been done, but he could not but come to the conclusion that the flounders which would pass through the 4½in. mesh would be appreciably larger than those passing through 4in. mesh. He thought that they ought to consider this matter together, because by using a wider mesh the fishermen were not only depleting the lake of flounders, but bringing public opinion against them. By using a fair mesh they would bring good sized flounders to market. Now, elsewhere the size of the mesh was larger than here. At Akaroa, for instance, the flounder-net mesh was 5in. This, he thought, was too large, and he hoped that with the conference that day they would be able to arrive at some conclusion as to the mesh, so that the unpleasantness of bringing up the fishermen for selling small flounders would be obviated. He desired to point out that the acclimatisation society did work for the public, and he hoped that they would be met in the same spirit that they had proposed the conference—viz., in a spirit of conciliation. They must remember that they had to consider the conservation of the fish as well as the living of the fishermen. He would now move, "That the Government be requested to fix the size of the nets used for catching flounders in Lake Ellesmere at 5in., measured diagonally, when prepared for use, netted and stretched."