

With regard to raising the minimum size of flounders that may be caught from 9in. to 10in., I am to state that this question will be taken into consideration the next time an alteration is made in the fishing regulations.

I have, &c.,

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Assistant Secretary.

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The Hon. Sir J. HALL to the Hon. the MINISTER of MARINE.

SIR,—

Wellington, 22nd May, 1888.

I have the honour to forward herewith a memorial to His Excellency the Governor, from the fishermen engaged in the fishery of Lake Ellesmere. This memorial embodies resolutions arrived at at a general meeting of these men held for the purpose of considering the measures which are required to place the fishing on a satisfactory footing.

At an interview with a deputation from the fishermen, I discussed the subject of the resolutions very fully, and trust, therefore, you will allow me to make a few remarks on them.

*Resolution No. 1.*—It will be seen that men engaged in this industry are themselves desirous that all fishing should be under license, and are willing to pay a license-fee. They even propose that a duty should be paid on all fish caught to defray the necessary expenses of supervision and administration. It is a very general opinion in the neighbourhood that some officer should be specially appointed to control the fishery, and it is very satisfactory to find that the fishermen are willing to provide the requisite funds in the manner above mentioned. With respect to the appointment of an auctioneer and providing a suitable fish-market, I explained to the deputation that these were not matters which should devolve on the Government. The selection of an auctioneer had better be done by agreement amongst themselves. The present fish-market is on a portion of the Christchurch railway-station, adjacent to the spot at which the boxes of fish are delivered from the railway-trucks. The space, however, is extremely limited, and much confusion is the result, and what the men wish for is more room in the station-yard. The traffic manager at Christchurch, to whom I applied, promised to see what could be done, but is afraid it will not be practicable to comply with the request.

*Resolution No. 2—Opening of the Lake.*—This question is a very important one, and there is great force in what is stated by the memorialists as to the effect on the fish-supply of the opening of Lake Ellesmere at the precise spot at which this is now done. I venture to suggest that early inquiry should be made by the Public Works Department as to the practicability and cost of opening the lake at the spot indicated in the memorial, and that, if the extra cost would not be large, this spot should be chosen the next time the lake has to be let out.

*Resolution No. 3—Permission to use a Floating-net of Small Mesh to catch Herring and Mullet.*—I understand the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society have no objection to this proposal, as it would not interfere with the flounders, which it would not reach.

*Resolution No. 4—Size of the Flounders-net.*—There seems no difference of opinion that for the setting-nets a 4½in. mesh would be a reasonable size; but, with regard to the drag-nets, the difference seems irreconcilable. The fishermen strongly protest against the mesh of this net being larger than 4in., while a large body of public opinion is in favour of a larger mesh. The question does not, however, press for immediate settlement, and, if the Government should decide on the appointment of a person to license the fishermen and control the fishing, it would probably obtain a report from him upon the subject before taking any action.

In conclusion, I beg to recommend this memorial to the earnest consideration of the Government. It gives the views of men who have had a long practical acquaintance with the subject with which it deals, it expresses their opinions with great moderation and fairness, and the proper decision of the questions raised in it is of vital importance to the memorialists, who are, as a rule, steady, industrious, and law-abiding men.

I am, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Marine.

JOHN HALL.

To His Excellency the GOVERNOR of NEW ZEALAND.

WE, the undersigned, being fishermen on Lake Ellesmere, and also owners of property and residences at the lake, engaged in the fishing industry (as set forth and enumerated in our previous petition against closing the lake, which was favourably considered by your Excellency), are of the humble opinion (which has been acquired in a number of cases by twenty years' experience in fishing on the lake) that the following resolutions, which were unanimously carried at a meeting of fishermen held in the Orange Hall, Leeston, on the 15th March, 1888, will regulate and improve the fishing industry in Lake Ellesmere, and will largely increase the revenue to the Government by a much greater quantity of fish being sent daily by railway.

The following are the resolutions:—

(1.) *Fish-market and Fishermen to be licensed.*—"That this meeting is of opinion that the time has come when the fishing industry at Lake Ellesmere should be licensed to bring the same directly under the supervision of the Government, and that the Government be asked to establish a fish-market in Christchurch for the better sale of fish, and also appoint an auctioneer for this purpose; and the fishermen also agree to pay duty on all fish caught to meet this expenditure, if necessary." Moved by Joseph Grupen, seconded by Charles Johnston.

(2.) *Opening of the Lake.*—"That this meeting petitions the Government to open the lake (next time such is reopened) a mile further east than the present opening, which is at Tamutu. We are of opinion that this would then leave a much larger spawning-ground for the flounders, as this fish spawns in the narrow mouth of the lake at Tamutu and directly alongside where the present opening is made into the sea. When, therefore, the opening is made into the sea, very large quantities of young flounders and spawn are washed out to sea by the strong current running in this