

place, and only a small proportion find their way back again. It is our humble opinion that opening the lake at the place proposed by us would only cost the Government a few more pounds than supposing it were opened at the usual place; and that this extra outlay, which will not cost more than £20, would only be for the first outlet, and it would, moreover, likely be a permanent opening, and would also insure a steady and constant supply of fish for the market, in consequence of the current in this place not being so strong as at the present opening, and, therefore, would not wash such large quantities of fish out into the sea, and at the same time would allow a greater quantity of sea-fish to come into the lake—namely, mullet, herring, rock-cod, &c. These fish are now being caught in the lake in considerable numbers.” Moved by Charles Johnston, seconded by John Stretz.

(3.) *Size of Nets.*—“That this meeting is of opinion that it is advisable to petition the Government to allow the fishermen at Lake Ellesmere to use a floating-net, with a 2½ in. mesh, to enable them to catch herrings, which are now very plentiful in the lake. We are also of opinion that this net will enable very large quantities of herrings and mullet to be caught and daily sent into Christchurch; and that at the present time the lake is full of these fish, which come into it from the sea, but the fishermen are unable to catch them in any quantity, owing to the mesh of their present nets being too large—namely, 4 in. mesh—now the only size allowed by the Government. Further, that, owing to this net being a floating-net, and, again, so small in the mesh, it will not be the means of catching any small flounders, which it is well known keep on the bottom of the lake. The floating-net is only some 24 in. deep.” Moved by Thomas Ingram, seconded by John Oberhuber.

(4.) “That this meeting is of the opinion that the 4 in. mesh now allowed by the Government is a most suitable one, and quite large enough to allow the fishermen to obtain a fair livelihood, and that an 11 in. flounder will pass through this mesh. But we are of the opinion that it is desirable to have a net with a 4½ in. mesh for setting-nets; and that the fishermen at the present time have a number of nets with meshes this size for catching the black flounder. That, if the 4 in. mesh is increased, numbers of the fishermen will have to give up their calling on Lake Ellesmere.” Moved by John Stretz, seconded by Matthew George.

The following are *bona fide* signatures of fishermen who own property and are engaged in the fishing industry on Lake Ellesmere.

We, the undersigned, humbly trust that the petition herein will receive your favourable consideration. We would gladly have intrusted our petition to the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society, but feared—from their action in petitioning your Excellency to close the lake against net-fishing, and thereby taking away your petitioners' livelihood—that they would not favourably entertain our wish to improve the fishing industry. We have signed ourselves as your loyal and obedient subjects of Canterbury, New Zealand, in the County of Selwyn.

THOS. INGRAM and 20 others.

T. W. DURANT, Commission Agent, Leeston.

The Hon. Mr. FISHER to the Hon Sir J. HALL.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 28th May, 1888.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant, forwarding a memorial to His Excellency the Governor from fishermen engaged in fishing in Lake Ellesmere; and to state that the memorial will be considered and a reply sent through you as soon as possible.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. Sir John Hall, M.H.R., &c., Wellington.

GEO. FISHER.

The Hon. Mr. FISHER to the Hon. Sir J. HALL.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 29th June, 1888.

Adverting to my letter of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to state, with regard to the petition of the Lake Ellesmere fishermen, first, that the Fisheries Bill now before the House provides for licensing fishermen, and that when a revenue is derived from the fisheries there will no doubt be no difficulty in the way of appointing proper officers for the purpose of enforcing the regulations; but that, as regards the appointment of a fish auctioneer, I think that is a matter in which the Government should not interfere.

2. I understand that you have communicated with the Public Works Department on the subject of opening the lake as the matter is one with which the Railway Department deals.

3. I scarcely think that it would be advisable to sanction the use of a floating-net of the 2½ in. mesh to catch herring; but I will ask the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society to express its views on the proposal, and when the society's reply is received the matter will be further considered.

4. The net of 4 in. mesh now authorised by the regulations to be used in the lake is a seine; and, before doing anything with regard to authorising the use of set-nets of 4½ in. mesh, I should like to be fully informed as to how these set-nets are used.

I have, &c.,

GEO. FISHER,

(For Minister having charge of Marine Department.)

The Hon. Sir John Hall, M.H.R., Wellington.

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

SIR,—

Marine Department, 29th June, 1888.

A petition having been received from fishermen and others, praying that a floating-net with 2½ in. mesh and 24 in. deep may be authorised to be used in Lake Ellesmere for the purpose of