

SESSION II.
1906.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC PETITIONS A TO L COMMITTEE:

(REPORT OF) ON THE PETITION OF F. EARLE AND OTHERS, OF AUCKLAND; TOGETHER WITH
MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND APPENDIX.

(MR. LAWRY, CHAIRMAN.)

Report brought up on the 27th October, 1906, and ordered to be printed.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

FRIDAY, THE 24TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1906.

Ordered, "That a Committee be appointed, consisting of ten members, to consider all petitions from A to L that may be referred to it by the Petitions Classification Committee, to classify and prepare abstracts of such petitions in such form and manner as shall appear to it best suited to convey to the House all requisite information respecting their contents, and to report the same from time to time to this House; also to have power to call for persons and papers; three to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. Gray, Mr. Hall, Mr. Lawry, Mr. Lethbridge, Mr. Lewis, Mr. R. McKenzie, Mr. Remington, Mr. Symes, Mr. Wood, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. MILLAR.)

REPORT.

No. 623.—Petition of F. EARLE and 7 Others, of Auckland.

PETITIONERS pray that the boundaries of the Auckland Acclimatisation Society be not altered.

I am directed to report that this Committee, having carefully considered the evidence, is strongly of opinion that the proposal to subdivide the Auckland Acclimatisation District, being opposed to the best interests of acclimatisation and sport, should not be given effect to, and recommends the Government to grant the prayer of the petition.

27th October, 1906.

F. LAWRY, Chairman.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

ALFRED KIDD, M.H.R., examined. (No. 1.)

Witness: The petition I have presented speaks well for itself. The acclimatisation society has done a very large amount of work, and has been for many years in existence. Its revenues have been spent, as the petition indicates, for the development of trout-fisheries in the Rotorua district especially, but generally all over where streams are available. It is only within the last eight or ten days that any knowledge of this change has come to the knowledge of the society, and it is only within the last year or two that the revenues they have received have been reproductive. Up to that date the moneys that the society had received had been spent without any return at all; and they have now a large staff under their control paid for out of the revenues, and a hatchery which has cost over a £1,000, and which I understand the Government do not even propose to take over—the area on which it stands being excluded from the boundaries that they have marked as within the new district. Practically, it means that after a lifetime's work, and having arrived at a successful career, they are to be blotted out; because it means a loss of over £500 a year out of a revenue of £660, leaving as the balance of working-capital available only some £160, with which it will be utterly impossible to carry on the work. While it may be admitted that the Government will do as well, they cannot do it better; and it must seem to you, as it does to myself, and the public of Auckland and its surroundings, that this has not been done in a way pleasant to all parties. There has been no notice given that such action would be taken until the last few days, and it was only then that the society realised the possibility of being wiped out of existence. They have sent down Mr. Payton to explain the nature of what is going to be done and the enormous disaster that will ensue to the society, and he will give you the reasons why this should not be carried out. I will not take up your time at any greater length, because Mr. Payton is possibly more conversant with the subject, being a member of the council of the society. I know there are few bodies associated together in any place that have worked so industriously and so wholeheartedly, without fee or reward, for the general good as the Auckland Acclimatisation Society. The money derived has not been considered as private revenue, because when money was not available the members of the society would willingly put their hands in their pockets; and, furthermore, the whole of the money received by them has been spent in the betterment of sport in the province.

1. *Mr. Symes.*] I would like to ask Mr. Kidd in regard to a statement that has been made that the society neglected to stock very important streams emptying into the Bay of Plenty. Is there anything in that?—No. These streams have not been neglected, but their stocking with trout was delayed. The efforts of the society have been directed towards distributing the ova into the larger streams of the district. You all know that the trout-fisheries of Rotorua are the best in the world, and have drawn fishermen from all parts of the world. The subsidiary streams will now receive every attention, because the hatcheries are able to supply them. Owing to the large amount required for stocking the streams and lakes of Rotorua, the hatcheries were not in a position to do this in the past. There is a very large staff employed, who will have to be discharged immediately if the decision of the Government is carried into effect, and the hatchery, which has cost over £1,000, will be practically useless to the society. It is true that some streams have not received the attention which might have been desirable, because the larger streams required greater consideration; but nothing has been left undone that could be done, nor has there been at any time any allegation that there has been any neglect on the part of the society. The larger streams have, of course, received the attention they deserved, and now the Rotorua district is known to possess the finest fishery-streams in the world. The smaller streams, neglect of which is all that the Government can allege against the society, will receive attention, and the ova will be distributed amongst them; but if this proposal is given effect to the whole work will be practically ruined.

2. *Mr. Gray.*] Has the Government ever contributed any money towards the funds of the acclimatisation society?—None. The work has been carried on by the subscriptions of the members for a great number of years, assisted by the license fees.

3. It is a purely voluntary society?—Yes; and out of nothing it has grown to be one of the largest acclimatisation societies in the colony.

4. How are the Government proposing to take over Rotorua and other districts?—By simply drawing a boundary-line and taking the district over.

5. Can they do that without any Act of Parliament?—Yes, by an Order in Council.

6. Have they indicated that they are willing to compensate the society?—No; they have given no indication at all.

7. Would the society, if compensation were offered for the stock-in-trade, be willing to part with this portion of their district?—I see no way out of it. They would be very reluctant to do so, as the hatcheries which cost over £1,000 would be absolutely worthless to them. To stock these smaller streams would not require the plant which they have at present. They would be forced to make the best terms they could.

8. Have you made any calculation as to what was the income from this source in the districts the Government propose to acquire? Have you formed any idea as to what its capitalised value is?—Yes. The total fees from the fisheries are £649 11s. The amount issued in the districts taken by the Government is £510 16s. 10d., leaving a balance of only £138. Therefore, out of the total revenue of £650 the Government take £510 under this proposal.

9. Then, it would practically cripple your association—even ruin it?—It would ruin it. There is nothing left to work on out of that balance. We could not keep the staff and the hatcheries going, and we have no indication that they would even be taken over by the Government. The whole thing would be lost.

10. I understand the Government proposes to take over the property you have accumulated for the capital value?—No; they have not said a word about taking it over. They have cut a line and taken all the revenue-producing parts out of the society's area, and have left the hatcheries to the society.

11. They are practically taking what you have out there, and what is a source of revenue—the fish?—Yes.

12. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Rotorua is a national park or domain?—Yes.

13. What right do you think you have, any more than the rest of the community?—We have a legal right. What has been done by the society has been for the good of the people, and we have been left to do that work for nearly forty years unmolested.

14. Do you think that the Auckland Acclimatisation Society have any more claim on Rotorua than Napier or any other society?—I am only speaking for the Auckland Society.

15. Why should you get the fishing licenses?—We get the fishing licenses to enable us to propagate the fish and stock the streams, without which there would be no licenses wanted. Do you not think the Government should come to some better arrangement than to say, "We will take the whole thing over"? They allowed us to build houses, get together plant, staff, and hatcheries for fish; and when after years of trouble we arrive at a successful stage, they say, "We will take it all over." Do you think that is fair treatment?

16. I think you are well treated. I do not see how you have any more right to these licenses than the rest of the community?—We have absolutely created the best fisheries in the world, and many members of the association have spent a lifetime in doing this good and great work.

17. You would like to have that £500 a year?—The £500 that is being taken by the Government is practically all our revenue outside our subscriptions, and it is only within the last two or three years that we have been receiving it. It is only when it starts to pay us that the Government says, "We will take over the results of all your work."

18. They are not taking your hatcheries?—No; but they will be of no use to us now.

19. *Mr. Wood.*] Have the Government contributed any money to your society?—Nothing at all.

20. During the whole time?—No. The whole of the work has been done by the society.

21. And they have given nothing at all towards it?—Nothing. We have created all the fisheries in the district. Nobody can even bring a charge of bad administration against us, or show that we have wasted or maladministered the funds at our disposal.

22. I am only asking if the Government contributed in the way of fish or funds?—No.

23. No assistance in any shape or form?—No.

24. *The Chairman.*] This report—the departmental report—says that the society has done nothing towards stocking the streams running into the Bay of Plenty on the east coast?—So far as I know, that may be true, but you must understand that that area is not in our district at all. While we would be quite willing to give all that is necessary to stock those streams, they are not within our boundaries. There is no disinclination to help any surrounding society, but that district is out of our limit.

25. Are you aware that one of the best fishing-rivers in New Zealand is running into the Bay of Plenty—the Rangitaiki?—Yes; and I am quite aware that there are many streams on that side that would be benefited by the introduction of fish. I am sure that this society would be glad to help them.

26. There is another statement here: that a couple of years ago the society had not provided rangers, and it was only under pressure from the Government that rangers were appointed to protect the fish in the streams. Do you know anything about that?—I know that from lack of funds the society could not do all it desired, but as soon as funds were available they appointed rangers for the protection of the fisheries.

27. *Mr. Gray.*] Has the district over which the Auckland Acclimatisation Society has jurisdiction ever been properly defined?—Yes, we have a district defined. The district within which our society carries on operations includes Rodney, Waitemata, Eden, Manukau, Coromandel, Thames, Raglan, Waikato, Ohinemuri, Waipa, Piako, Kawhia, West Taupo, and Rotorua, or any other portion of the North Island the inhabitants of which may desire to become incorporated with the society. Any body who wishes the assistance of the society or desires to be incorporated with it can become so.

28. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Supposing the people of Rotorua start an acclimatisation society?—They have a branch there now.

29. Why should they not have a society of their own?—They have never expressed any desire for one.

30. You have no legal status?—We have; and our power to collect license fees and appoint rangers is a recognition of it.

31. *Mr. Gray.*] Was that area conveyed to you by *Gazette* notice or in the form of a document from the Government giving you jurisdiction over that portion of the North Island?—Yes; it was gazetted in the old provincial days, and has never been attacked or questioned.

32. Of course, it would be a matter of thirty or forty years ago?—It is quite a good while ago—in 1867, I believe.

33. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] I do not think they intended to allow you to roam all over the North Island?—They intended to allow us to roam within our district as long as we carried out the duties of the society, which we have done to the great advantage of the country.

E. W. PAYTON, Remuera, Auckland, examined. (No. 2.)

Witness: I am a member of the council of the Auckland Acclimatisation Society. The report of the Department seems to me of such an extraordinary nature that it wants, on my part, very careful answering. As I read it, I was unable to find one single statement which was in accordance

with the facts. It starts by saying, "Also that there appears to be a tendency on the part of the societies to regard moneys received for licenses as private property of the societies, while as a matter of fact license fees are in every sense public moneys, and under the Fisheries Conservation Act these fees are bound to be expended by the societies on the protection and distribution of fish." Naturally it does; but in dividing a district, as the Department proposes, it is only a small portion of the district that is proposed to be taken—considerably less than one-half of it—whereas five-sixths of our income is being taken. The remaining income, with which we should have to deal with more than one-half of the present district—£130 per annum instead of £650—would be totally inadequate, and so far as we can see we should have to cease our operations altogether. The report goes on: "In reference to the petition, I would point out that in dividing the district, which reduces the revenue, it at the same time reduces the area of the district on which the moneys of the society have in the past had to be expended." I beg to protest against any such statement as that. It is absolutely contrary to fact. We never looked upon these revenues as private property. We have expended every penny for the last twelve or fifteen years on the propagation and distribution of fish. The funds have never been looked upon as private money, and a balance-sheet has been published every year, to which every one had access. We are quite aware that it is under the Fisheries Conservation Act, and have spent the whole money in restocking, importation, and so forth. "I should like to remark that the Auckland Society, notwithstanding the fact that for many years its chief source of revenue has been the Hot Lakes district, has provided no ranger until the last two seasons, when pressure was brought to bear on the society by the Government, and special concessions granted it." That is not true. For many years before the Tourist Department was in existence we had a ranger there. No pressure has been brought to bear by the Government. I should like to be allowed to state on behalf of the society that, in my opinion, the gentleman who wrote this report should be present here. The statements are so extraordinary that they must be contradicted. The ranger has a small house provided by the society, grazing for a horse, and a boat. "With the number of officers which the Government has employed in the Hot Lakes district, who are distributed widely, a very much more systematic and complete method of ranging can be carried on than is possible under the society's management." That I beg to dispute. We have at least one paid ranger, and have also honorary rangers who are probably as good as paid rangers. In addition, there are generally three members of the council at Rotorua during the whole fishing season, and I dispute that any paid official can do such work as this in addition to his own, as well as the rangers or officers of the society, paid or otherwise. I should like to ask how these rivers have got stocked if the Auckland Society did not stock them. The Kaituna, Tarawera, and Rangitaiki are the three finest streams there. We have stocked them because they begin in our district, although the bulk of the rivers is outside, and the rest of those rivers referred to are absolutely outside of our district. He says, "The Tourist Department has had to stock them." We have presented the fish free to the Department for stocking these rivers. This year we gave them twenty-five thousand fish. We did everything we could to assist, although these waters are absolutely outside of our district. Whakatane County is not in the district of the Auckland Acclimatisation Society. I deny on behalf of the society that there has been any confusion or divided authority in the past, nor need there be in the future. This gentleman is confusing two things—the fishing public and the tourists. We do not regard tourists as fishermen. Some are so, perhaps, for one or two days, and for their benefit we have created one-day licenses; but the gentlemen who take whole-year licenses are very numerous indeed, and these can scarcely be considered as tourists, as they spend weeks or months in the neighbourhood for the fishing alone. To show this, I may point out that out of the total sum taken for fishing licenses, over £650, there were 633 whole-season licenses, so that it does not leave a very great sum as being derived from the one-day licenses. There are a very large number of people from the Old Country and Australia who come out every year specially for the fishing. They are not tourists. They stay a long time and do no sight-seeing. There is a gentleman staying with me in the Royal Oak now who was in Rotorua for five months last year for the fishing, and I do not think we could call him a tourist. That disposes of that letter.

34. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Symes raises the question as to your gazetted boundaries?—The district within which the society carries on operations includes Rodney, Waitemata, Eden, Manukau, Coromandel, Thames, Raglan, Waikato, Ohinemuri, Waipa, Piako, Kawhia, West Taupo, and Rotorua, or any other portion of the North Island the inhabitants of which may desire to become incorporated with the society. I may mention that there are many other societies in the North Island similar to ours. We are bounded in the north by Whangarei and in the south by Taranaki and Hawke's Bay.

35. *Mr. Symes.*] How was it specially constituted a district? Was it by Provincial Orders, or did local people just take it on themselves to form a society to administer a certain area?—In the first instance the Government was asked to undertake the work of acclimatisation, but would not. A number of Auckland gentlemen formed a society. This was in 1867. I think, in the first instance a suitable locality was settled upon and it was gazetted.

36. I suppose it started in a small way and increased?—In a very small way. Until 1895 the income from fishing licenses was only £20, or something of that sort. In the last three years the increase has been very great—quite abnormal.

37. The Fisheries Conservation Act was passed in 1884, but your society was dragging on an existence for twenty years before the Act was passed?—That is so.

38. The Government have never interfered in any way since the passing of the Act?—We have never had interference until one or two minor details lately, which are not important.

39. They practically recognised your society?—Yes, it has always been recognised.

40. The present matter has been only quite recently spoken of?—Only within the last few days.

41. Do you know anything of a Rod and Gun Club at Rotorua?—I have heard something of it. It was started, I think, as a sort of mild opposition to us, but I am not quite certain of that. I am not certain whether it was started as a branch or in mild opposition.

42. Do you know the President, Mr. Maxwell?—He is one of the gentlemen who was sending down telegrams of congratulation to the Premier on this proposal.

43. Has your society ever had any complaint from residents at Rotorua, or a suggestion that they should be formed into a separate society?—We have had no complaint, but I believe a complaint was made to the Government because they could not get all they wanted—sale of fish, and all that kind of thing. I think that was the start of the Rod and Gun Club. We were aware of its existence, and aware that it scarcely represented the sporting residents of Rotorua.

44. *Mr. Lewis.*] Am I right in assuming that this Bill will practically wipe your society out of existence or cripple it?—It will either do one thing or the other. We should be left an income of £130 per annum or so from fishing licenses, and I doubt if that would be sufficient to carry on with. I think our income would be so small that we should probably have to close down operations. We have a hatchery which would be absolutely useless to us, and which cost £1,000, and a staff of four or five men whom we should have to sack. It will practically close operations, leaving us, as it proposes, with a district larger than the one the Government proposes to take.

45. Do you mean larger with regard to acreage or number of streams?—Acreage.

46. What would be the number of streams in the district left to you, roughly speaking?—I could not tell exactly. It goes down into the King-country. We have stocked some of those streams, but some are only sluggish waters. The other districts contain only a few small streams, tributaries of the Thames, the Waikou, and the Waikato itself. The line of boundary is just drawn so that the hatchery is left to us.

47. *Mr. Wood.*] How long have you been connected with the society, or has it been in existence?—It has been in existence about forty years—since 1867, I think. There was a society before it, but this has been in existence for that time.

48. Had you any standing? Was it gazetted, or had you any constitution?—I think it was gazetted.

49. I think I heard you say that the first notion you got of the Government's proposal was about a week ago?—Roughly, about a week ago. That was a telegram sent that there was a proposal to include this portion of our district in the Tourist Department's control. The next thing was a statement in the paper that the district was to be taken over.

50. A week ago was the first you heard about it?—About a week ago.

51. Did you know that there was a petition before the House signed by two hundred, and that before that they had written to your society?—I was not aware of it, nor do I think our council ever heard of it.

52. The petition was before the House last session, before this very same Committee. In 1904 it was sent to the Minister, and your association knew about it at that time?—That is possible, but all I can say is that I did not.

53. What position have you in the society?—I am on the council. I am only on it since last year.

54. What is the amount of money you get annually from these fishing licenses?—Do you wish me to strike an average, because it is very large over the last three years. A telegram I have here shows that the total last year was £649 11s. 1d., of which £510 was taken in the district proposed to be acquired by the Government.

55. I think I heard you say you had built a house at something like a cost of £1,000?—Not a house—a fish-hatchery.

56. Have you been using that hatchery?—Oh, yes. It has recently been enlarged; I think £130 was spent on it last season.

57. *The Chairman.*] The Committee understand you to say that you have stocked streams that were tributaries to those three streams you named?—We have stocked a number. They are streams which happen to come into our own boundaries, but they empty themselves in the Bay of Plenty. We have stocked the upper waters, and they have been good fishing-waters for years. The streams themselves are outside our district.

58. Did you understand Mr. McKenzie to say that outsiders had as much right as you had?—I understood that.

59. Did you give outsiders the same privilege?—Exactly the same.

60. So that, in your opinion, that argument falls to the ground?—I could not see anything in it. We treat those from England or Australia the same as ourselves.

61. Have you any reserve fund?—Two or three hundred pounds accumulated with the idea of importing ground-game. In past years it was the chief source of income. It was from that revenue that we imported rainbow trout, the only rainbow trout ever imported here. We were trying to accumulate a little on that account. The amount at the present time, I think, is about £300, but a considerable portion would have to be spent pretty well at once.

62. *Mr. Symes.*] There is one question I should like to have emphasized, because the departmental report says that no rangers have been provided. Could you tell the Committee about the date of appointment of your first ranger?—Speaking from memory, I do not think I could do that; but to my knowledge he has been there for five or six years, because he conducted—and successfully conducted—prosecutions six years ago. Before that we used to allow the police a bonus. Mr. Spratt is our head ranger.

63. You say the society built him a house?—A little house on the lake, and they have provided him with a horse and a boat, so that he can go over the district as much as possible.

64. In your opinion, the Tourist Department must have been aware of this appointment?—Certainly. Mr. Donne knew it years ago.

65. I suppose you cannot give any reason for saying there was no ranger?—I know Mr. Donne knew it; also Mr. Warbrick and Mr. Walnut.

66. *Mr. Wood.*] Do you catch the fish and put them into the streams?—We take them for stripping from the Uthina, which is especially suitable for that. This year we have taken some from Tarawera as an experiment. Mr. Ayson did the same.

67. *Mr. Lewis.*] In your experience, do you get better results from pond-fish or wild fish?—Do you mean here or at Home?

68. If there is any difference between the conditions here or at Home, would you say tame fish or wild fish?—Wild fish, most unhesitatingly.

69. *Mr. Wood.*] If there is no necessity, why build hatcheries?—Hatcheries are undoubtedly necessary. Many thousands have been spent at Masterton for the same purpose.

70. *The Chairman.*] Your main fishery is on the main stream above Okoroire?—It used to be there, but for several years the fishing there has gone right off. This year we have had to put large quantities of yearling fish out to keep the stock up. We have not found out what is wrong, but there is disease amongst the fish in the Rotorua neighbourhood, and Mr. Gilruth was sent up to make a report on it. We were refused the result of Mr. Gilruth's report.

71. *Mr. Lewis.*] To what do you attribute the disappearance of ground-game?—My own impression is that poison is the cause. That is a general impression; but others say that it is the peculiar seasons.

72. Rabbits?—Poisoning on a very large scale on all the roads for rabbits.

C. R. C. ROBIESON examined. (No. 3.)

Witness: I am sorry there is one error in my report. I was called upon to make the report at about half an hour's notice, and I did not have an opportunity of looking up the boundaries of the district of the Auckland Acclimatisation Society. Therefore, I accept Mr. Payton's statement that these streams I referred to as having been recently stocked by the Department from fish given by the Auckland Acclimatisation Society are outside their boundary. The question seems to be one of what is best to be done under present conditions—not of what was best in the past. In regard to the ranger, I think you will find on the files I have given to the Committee that there was a controversy between the Auckland Society and the Department as to appointing a permanent ranger two years ago. The society said they were unable to have a permanent ranger in Rotorua unless the Government gave them the right to open a fish-shop to sell fish. I think Mr. Payton is wrong in saying that they had a permanent ranger in Rotorua prior to the season before last. I do not know if Mr. Donne knew anything about it. He was absent when the discussion took place. Mr. Walnut has been there only two years. I do not think there is any use in expressing an opinion as to whether honorary or paid rangers are more advisable. So far there has been nothing to show what would be the result of Government Rangers, as there have not been any. Mr. Payton said there had been no contention about dual control. I want to point out just one or two cases. At Lake Tarawera last year hundreds of fish died in the streams entering into that lake on account of getting suffocated with the ash that washes into the streams from over that district, and it was some time before we could get anything done. The matter was brought before the Auckland Acclimatisation Society, and ultimately they agreed to bear the cost of wire-netting the mouths of streams at the places required, if the Department would agree to bear cost of transport and erection. At the present moment fish in the Fairy Stream at Rotorua are in a very bad state. The society has done nothing so far, although the matter has been brought under their notice. In regard to rangers, I want to point out that right through the Rotorua district this Department has officers permanently stationed—at Okaroire, Tarawera, Waimangu, &c. Guides are constantly going over that district, so that we must be in an excellent position to range that district. In regard to his statement about a smaller area being taken away from the Auckland Society and a larger area left, I would like to say that the Rotorua district is one that contains nearly the whole of the lakes and most of the rivers. The statement has been made that if we take away this district we are taking away the greater portion of the society's revenue, and that in consequence the society will not be able to carry on. I want to show from a statement made by the secretary of the Auckland Society, from 1896 to 1905, that they stated, without counting the expenses of the hatchery, that they have spent more money at Rotorua than they have received from it; so that in that case there could be no argument that the Government would cripple their finances by taking it away. (In answer to Mr. Payton, the income was £276 13s. 6d. in 1905, and the expenditure £262.) Another question is that the Auckland Society knew nothing about the proposed change. I want to point to a letter written on the 28th November, 1904, to the Colonial Secretary, protesting against the application of the Rotorua people for a separate district. On page 3 of that letter they claim that the greater part of their revenue comes from tourists. Mr. Payton made a statement just now that the society got most of their revenue from season-license holders who are not tourists. The statement of the Auckland Society's secretary seems to me to show that if there is anything that the Government is entitled to it is the money that tourists spend in Rotorua. The General Government has gone to great expense to attract people there—the railway traffic has risen from five thousand six hundred to eighteen thousand, and these are the people who are contributing to the Auckland Society's revenue. It seems to me that if any one is entitled to the benefit of their presence and the money they spend, it is the General Government.

73. *Mr. Lewis.*] Do you not give the society credit for creating the traffic?—I give the Government credit.

74. People go there to catch trout that the society has put into the stream?—If the Government had done nothing for Rotorua, then these people would not go there. They are not going solely for the fish. A large number of people who come out to see the sights and go to Rotorua for that purpose also fish there. One other reason I want to put in evidence is this: a petition which was before the House last year, and signed by 205 residents of Rotorua, praying for a separate association was recommended to the Government by the Committee for consideration. Those people who signed this petition have, since the proposal was made to place the district under the Tourist Department, written and telegraphed to the Department that they are fully satisfied that the administration should be under the Department, and not under the local society.

74. *Mr. Payton.*] The whole of the two hundred?—The chairman of the Rod and Gun Club, Mr. Iles, representing those interested.

75. *Mr. Lewis.*] Have you any recollection of a letter in those terms?—Yes. [Referring to the attached letter from Mr. A. J. Iles, chairman of the Rod and Gun Club, Rotorua: “As far as I can see, nothing will be gained by creating a separate acclimatisation district at Rotorua. The Auckland association has done all the work of stocking this district, and in my opinion it is giving every possible attention to the matter, and I do not think the establishment of a local society would in any way improve the present conditions.”]

76. Which involves separating the district from the Auckland Society?—As far as the society could—

77. That was your opinion?—The position has changed. A local society would be in the same position as regards ranging as the Auckland Society, and in regard to the divided control of the Rotorua district.

78. You say it is impossible for a society run by enthusiasts to give the same attention as paid Government officers, who probably have no interest in sport at all—simply executive officers?—That is so.

79. *Mr. Symes.*] You think, then, that some people who are not enthusiasts, but paid machines to do the work, would carry it out better than enthusiasts?—I certainly think that a paid man would carry out the work better than an enthusiast who is not paid.

80. I am sorry that your and my opinions differ very considerably?—The position is that a man who is paid to do certain work does it. The man who is not paid considers all his friends in the matter when it comes to a question of prosecution, and so forth.

81. Do you think, then, that the conditions have so materially altered since December, 1904, to the present time that this work ought to be undertaken by a Government Department created for the purpose?—I thought in 1904 that it should be done by a Government Department. I think the whole acclimatisation-work of the colony should be carried out by a Government Department and centralised. The funds now received by the acclimatisation societies total over £10,000 a year, and I hardly think it is claimed that the colony is getting ten thousand pounds' worth of work.

82. Who created this sport—did the Department create it?—Not the Department, but the Government very largely, though.

83. In this district?—I cannot say what was done in that particular district.

84. We have had it in evidence that the Government has never contributed anything?—Not to trout-fishing? In cash, do you mean?

85. In anything, to the Auckland Acclimatisation Society?—I do not know how far the district extends; but I would like to mention that the Government recently sent deer to Tongariro Park and to the Taupo side—the Hawke's Bay side—of the Kaimanawa Range—three lots of deer.

Mr. Payton: These are all outside the Auckland district.

86. *Mr. Symes.*] You say this is quite recently?—Yes. I do not know who liberated fallow deer in the Waikato. Probably that is outside their district.

87. You think that, notwithstanding the fact that this sport has been created by the people themselves, the people who have gone to the expense and trouble to create it are not better calculated to administer it than paid officers?—I certainly think that the position is ripe, now that the question of sport is so complicated, for change of control. It has gone past the time when boards managed by commercial men or those engaged in other pursuits could give sufficient time to do the work satisfactorily. I would like to point out in regard to the reference made to the hatcheries that if you call the Inspector of Fisheries he will tell you that hatcheries are not required at all, and that they are huge white elephants of extravagance. You can get all the young fish that you require through stripping fish from streams—fish living in the natural way. That is the opinion of Mr. Ayson, the Chief Inspector.

88. That would do, I take it, for spawn; but what about when you want to restock?—It is quite sufficient for all purposes. Eyeing-stations are quite sufficient; hatcheries are not required. If you want hatcheries at all, one in each Island would be quite sufficient, instead of having a number of huge and expensive concerns.

89. Still, these hatcheries have not been built by the Government—it is a case of individual local labour?—They have been built out of license fees, which are in every sense public moneys. It is a tax on sportsmen, and the only difference is that these fees are paid to the societies instead of to the General Government. I would further state that in the Masterton hatcheries a little while ago nearly the whole of the fish were suffering from cancerous diseases.

90. *Mr. Payton.*] I was going to ask the witness if, when the last regulations were framed, the Government had any intention of taking over the fishing at Rotorua from the Auckland Society?—I could not express an opinion. I am not in a position to declare what the Government's intentions were.

91. Did you say that they had no intention?—I could not possibly make such a statement, because I could not know.

E. W. PAYTON re-examined. (No. 4.)

Witness: I am rather sorry that the Acting-Superintendent of the Tourist Department has not thought it well to be here this morning, because you will remember that when we left off last week the last business was an attack by Mr. Robieson on the Auckland Acclimatisation Society, and it is against that attack I wish to protest and say a few words. I should therefore like Mr. Robieson to be here, but he does not choose to be here. It appears that he would rather hit the society and then run away. He mentioned the Tarawera Lake, and said he had written to the Auckland Society about the death of trout in the channel which flows into Tarawera Lake, but he had received no

answer and nothing had been done. To the best of my recollection, no letter has been received from the Tourist Department in this connection; but we have had several reports from our own ranger, and one or two from private members of the society, also from tourists, and the matter has for some time been under consideration. It is a matter very difficult to deal with. A number of trout run up a sandy bay in Tarawera Lake at spawning-time, and often get stranded either in running up or coming down again, and they die on account of being unable to get back to the water. The best remedy that has been suggested to us—and I may say that we have sent a member of our council up to report on this—was the fascining of the channel, at a cost of over £60, for a few hundred yards of this sandy bay. We were willing to do this, but two things occurred to us: one was that it was not a matter of trout-acclimatisation, but rather conservation; and the other was that the land through which this channel had to be made was either Maori land or Government land, and as such we had no right to put a spade into it at all. On this account we communicated with the Tourist Department, and asked them if they would undertake the work, pointing out that it would largely come within their province, and at the same time we offered to pay half the expense if they would let their own officers do the work—that is to say, giving them the chance of supervising and directing it. To the best of my recollection, this was about six weeks or two months ago. I left Auckland about a week ago, and up to that time the Tourist Department had not answered our inquiry or taken the slightest notice of it. The president of the acclimatisation society, in order that we might get an answer quickly, had interviewed Mr. Blow, the Auckland Manager of the Tourist Department. Mr. Blow had, I believe, twice written down to Wellington to the Head Office, putting all the facts before the Department, and asking for an early reply. Neither Mr. Blow nor our society had, up to the time of my leaving Auckland a week ago, received any reply whatever. That is one of the little things Mr. Robieson put against the society on Friday last. Mr. Robieson also made a point of the fact that the officers of the Tourist Department, being “constantly moving,” would be preferable to our committee, which he said was a committee of Auckland people, and which he inferred was a committee in Auckland. The Tourist Department are scarcely experts in fishery-work, and I take it that as paid servants they have their work to do. If extra work were put into their hands, even if they were well able to do it, it seems to me that it would not be so well done as by a committee of twelve gentlemen who have a considerable amount of leisure, and some of whom have their entire time at their own disposal, and who are enthusiastic sportsmen and experts in fishing matters. It seems to me that the officers of the Tourist Department would not have so good a chance of doing good to the Rotorua district as these gentlemen, more especially as during the fishing season not only do our rangers live in Rotorua practically the whole of the time, but I think I may say that three members of our council are generally also there. Another complaint was that in the Fairy Spring there were a number of diseased trout. Mr. Robieson said that the Tourist Department had asked us to destroy these diseased trout. I am quite willing to take his word that the Tourist Department did so request us, but I have never seen a letter nor anything about it. I may say that I was one of a sub-committee of this society which gave instructions some three months ago to have the trout destroyed that were diseased, and I am pretty sure that at the present time such trout have ceased to exist—although I have no actual report as to their having been killed. There is a point I might refer to here similar to the Tarawera land question. The Fairy Spring is situated about a mile from Rotorua Lake. During the whole of its course it flows through Maori land. The spring itself, which consists of a little pool scarcely larger than one of these tables, is Maori property, situated in the midst of a large Maori block, and is made a source of revenue by the Natives. As to whether we have power to go on their land and kill their trout we have considerable doubt. That is a difficulty. Mr. Robieson said he was under the impression that paid officers of the Tourist Department would be less liable to favouritism than unpaid members of a society, who might be, perhaps, enthusiasts or experts, and suggested that in the case of one's friend being prosecuted for some breach of the law a member of the council might be inclined to be a little lenient. I would like to mention a matter—perhaps a little unimportant—which may show, at any rate, that we have endeavoured to act with common-sense in these matters. Two years ago, I think, the present Premier of this colony and one or two members of this House were seen by our rangers fishing on Rotorua Lake without having any licenses. The matter was referred to our council, and the Rotorua residents who are now telegraphing to the Premier congratulating him upon the passing of this Act of Confiscation, as we call it, were the very people who did all they could to persuade us to prosecute the Premier for the breach of the law. But we did not do it. Another question raised by Mr. Robieson was that of a hatchery. Our hatchery, which I stated had cost over £1,000, was declared by him to be useless, or, at any rate, of very little use indeed, and he mentioned Mr. Ayson's name as the authority for his statement. I scarcely think, however, that Mr. Ayson would be prepared to confirm what Mr. Robieson said. Mr. Ayson is a practical man whom I have known on and off for twenty years, and for his opinion I have a considerable amount of respect, while Mr. Robieson is a gentleman, so far as I know, without any knowledge about fishing. Mr. Robieson stated that Mr. Ayson was of opinion that the hatchery was useless at the present day, and that a small eyeing-station was sufficient for the distribution of the trout. Mr. Ayson would, I am sure, back me up in saying that for stocking virgin streams, such as we have in the Auckland Province, trout-fly are in many cases of no value. The majority of our waters are filled with eels, and trout-fry are almost, one might say, the natural food of the eel and the shag; and our greatest success has been attained by stocking virgin waters with yearling fish. For yearling fish a hatchery is absolutely necessary for our district and for hatching fry in such very large numbers as we have turned out. Last year we turned out five hundred and seventy-two thousand fish, besides yearling fish. That could not possibly have been done at a small eyeing-station. I was asked a question last week by one gentleman of this Committee, as to the status of the society. I was not in a position to state it definitely, and wired to our secretary, and I will read the telegram I have received: “Society is registered under ‘Animals Protection Act,

1867.' District specified in registration; again registered under Act of 1880. Original district reduced by formation small societies such as Bay of Islands, Whangarei. Right to revenue, game licenses, section 33, Animals Protection Act. Right to fish licenses, see section 10, 'Fishing Conservation, 1902.' Previous to that Act by regulations gazetted under Act 1884. Gazetted 23rd October, 1899." I was in doubt as to the details, and I simply said last week that the society had, as far as I was aware, been registered. That fully confirms what I then said. A good deal of what I had to say in reply to Mr. Robieson the other day was contained in a little statement I had drawn up, and which I need not refer to again to-day. There are one or two points, however, I should like to mention. As to the question of complaints, it has been suggested that complaints had been made against the society. The only complaints that we have had made against us have come from a small section of what I might call the business community at Rotorua, who are interested in fishing in the way of commerce—such as fishing-tackle sellers, launch-owners, and so on. I think the reason we have incurred the hostility of this section is because we have, through our rangers, had to keep an eye on some of these gentlemen to prevent breaches of the law. One name was mentioned by Mr. Robieson last week as the author of a telegram to the Premier, giving an account of an enthusiastic meeting approving the action of the Government; and he is a man that our society has this year proved to have sent down to Auckland in pretty regular weekly instalments nearly 2 tons of trout to hotels, clubs, freezing companies, and others. I leave it to you to say whether that has been done out of pure love for the hotels and freezing companies. At present we have no actual proof that money has been received, but actual proof of the trout having been sent and delivered is in our hands. This has been done by a gentleman who a short time ago wired to the Premier that a large meeting of influential residents of Rotorua had been held, at which it was resolved unanimously to send a telegram of congratulation to the Premier about the proposed taking-over of the Rotorua fishing. I am in a position to state that this meeting was practically a private one. It took place in the house of the man of whom I have been speaking. It consisted, I think, of seven or eight launch-owners and fishing-tackle makers, and the meeting was not unanimous. One man, at least, protested against the telegram being sent at all. I only mention this because I am quite sure the Premier is too fair a man to do us an injustice if he knows the facts of the case. I have not had the honour of speaking to him about it, but I should like to have done so. I may say that one of the very few suggestions we have had from the Tourist Department came about two years ago, as to appointing this gentleman who sent the telegram—and also sent the 2 tons of trout to Auckland—as an issuer of licenses for the Rotorua district; but under the circumstances, and with the knowledge we possessed, we begged leave to decline to do so. I would like to say that all throughout we have been under the jurisdiction of the Government, and that the control of the regulations in connection with fishing have been in the hands of the Government. Our society has merely made suggestions suited to local requirements, and we have not seriously disputed any suggestion made by the Government at all. One suggestion which seemed to us to be a bad one we protested against, and the Rotorua section which is now so vigorous against us was still more vigorous then against the Government. That was as to the 30 lb. limit of fish. Our objection was that Rotorua Lake was enormously overstocked, and that the overstocking had undoubtedly caused disease. Generally speaking, the attitude of the Tourist Department to us till quite recently has been one of entire apathy. We have on many occasions asked for information and written to them on many points, and had no reply whatever. One particular instance I have already mentioned. I do not want to go over ground that I touched upon last week, as I know the time of the Committee is limited, but I would like to say that I had a wire on Saturday stating that very vigorous leading articles in both daily papers in Auckland—the *Star* and the *Herald*—had appeared strongly protesting against the proposed Act, showing that there is no party feeling in the matter, as the papers representing both the parties in politics are unanimous on this point. In conclusion, I would say that if we could think the giving-up of the control of this fishing to the Government was for the good of the colony we should agree to it; but we have one thing we must not forget, and that is this: We have received in voluntary subscriptions and donations beyond all licenses the sum of about £3,500 in support of our society, which has helped to build up the magnificent fishery we have at the present time; and can we, in justice to ourselves, give up without protest the results which we have largely secured by these means? I do not think it is for the good of the colony to give over to a number of paid servants the control of a large district, which has been undoubtedly well managed up to the present time by a committee of amateurs, enthusiasts, and experts. I do not think there is anything more I need say. I have endeavoured to cut my notes short this morning, but I hope I have put my case clearly before you. So far as we are aware, we have no enemies at all in the Auckland Province, barring the two or three Rotorua people, who are the chief agitators and who are commercially interested in this work. On that account it is, in our opinion, undesirable that they should in any sense have control of the fishery. I beg to read one or two telegrams received by our society to show that it has the sympathy of kindred societies [see telegrams in Appendix]. I beg leave to hand these copies to the Committee, together with a copy of the report, which gives the whole of our transactions for the year. I do so because Mr. Robieson tried to make out that we considered our society in too private a light, and the perusal of one of these will flatly contradict that statement. The society courts full public inquiry, and I am quite prepared to answer any questions put to me.

92. *Mr. Symes.*] I think one of your contentions was that the society was, at least, as competent to manage the work as the overworked Tourist Department?—I did not use the word "overworked."

93. No; that was my word. The Tourist Department must be overworked if it could not answer letters. I did not quite get the date, but I think it was about two months ago you said?—In that particular instance about the Tarawera Lake, I think that was from six weeks to two months ago. It must have been fully that. We have had two monthly meetings since then, at any rate.

94. This report of the society, I think, has been circulated before?—This particular one has only been circulated within the last few days, and I was only able to bring down two copies, but since then the secretary has posted me a dozen more.

95. It must have been the previous year's issue that I saw?—Yes. I believe similar reports and balance-sheets have been circulated every year for some forty years.

APPENDIX.

COPY OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED BY E. W. PAYTON FROM — CHEESMAN, SECRETARY, AUCKLAND ACCLIMATISATION SOCIETY.

TOTAL fishing licenses, £649 11s. 1d.; amount issued in district taken by Government, £510 16s. 10d.; issued in district left in society, £138 14s. 3d. Is this what you want?

CHEESMAN.

COPIES OF TELEGRAMS RECEIVED FROM KINDRED SOCIETIES.

1. From Hawke's Bay Society.

FORWARDED to Wellington this morning protest against proposed new acclimatisation district under Tourist Department.

C. FITZROY.

2. From Hamilton Anglers' Club.

WAIKATO Anglers' Club will strongly support society in protest against Government proposal.

PAUL, Secretary.

3. From Charles MacCulloch, Kirikiriroa.

I STRONGLY oppose the Government proposal of dissociating the Rotorua and Taupo Counties from our acclimatisation society. I wired Messrs. Massey and Herries strongly on the subject, and could get up a petition from Hamilton against it if necessary.

CHARLES MACCULLOCH.

In addition to the above, it is known that the Cambridge, Huntly, Te Aroha, and Clevedon Anglers' Clubs have all passed resolutions protesting against the proposed change. The resolutions are to be sent direct to Wellington, to both Sir Joseph Ward and the member for the district.

RESOLUTION FORWARDED BY TE AROHA ANGLERS' CLUB TO GOVERNMENT.

THAT this club strongly oppose the proposed action of Tourist and Health Resorts Department in the taking-over of all or any portion of the district now under the jurisdiction of the Auckland Acclimatisation Society, as they consider that the wants and requirements of sport can be better looked after by a body of private individuals who are enthusiasts in this matter rather than by Government officials.

PROTEST FROM HUNTLY ANGLERS' CLUB.

THE members of the Huntly Anglers' Club strenuously protest against the proposal of the Government to constitute a new acclimatisation district by severing Rotorua, East Taupo, and parts of West Taupo and Piako from the district controlled by the Auckland Acclimatisation Society, and placing such new district under the control of the Tourist Department; that they are in full accord with the sentiments expressed at a meeting held recently in Auckland, and agree with the opinions embodied in the petition to be forwarded to the Right Hon. the Premier; that they are of opinion that the creation of the proposed new district will be a gross injustice to the Auckland Society, which for the past thirty-nine years has done excellent service for the colony as a whole and for the Auckland District in particular, such service having been rendered gratuitously and wholly in the interests of sport; that when success is assured by the prospect of a certain and steady revenue, the whole province will suffer if the jurisdiction of the parent society is in any way curtailed or interfered with; and that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Right Hon. the Premier and to the member for the district (Mr. Massey).

PROTEST FROM THE WAIKATO ANGLERS' CLUB.

At a meeting of the Waikato Anglers' Club a resolution was passed strongly condemning the proposal of the Government to take over part of the Auckland Acclimatisation Society's district, and that the members of the Waikato Anglers' Club will strongly support the society in their petition to the Government. Unless the Government decide to control the whole of the societies of the colony, the Waikato Anglers' Club is of opinion that the Auckland Society should not be interfered with.

Copies forwarded to Sir Joseph Ward and the member for the district (Mr. Greenslade).

PROTEST FROM THE TE AROHA ROD AND GUN CLUB.

THAT this club strongly oppose the proposed action of the Tourist and Health Resorts Department in the taking-over of all or any portion of the district now under the jurisdiction of the Auckland Acclimatisation Society, as they consider the wants and requirements of sport can be better looked after by a body of private individuals who are enthusiasts in these matters rather than by Government officials.

Forwarded to the Minister in Charge of Tourist and Health Resorts Department.

In addition to the protests, copies of which are annexed, others have been sent direct to Wellington from the following societies: (1) Hawke's Bay Society, per Mr. Fitzroy, President; (2) New Zealand Acclimatisation Societies' Association; (3) Thames Game Preservation Society (strong protest forwarded to the Premier and Mr. McGowan); (4) Cambridge Anglers' Club (protest forwarded to the Premier and the member for the district).

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,450 copies), £6 17s.

Price, 6d.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1906.

