

1913.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# PUBLIC PETITIONS A TO L COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF), ON THE PETITION OF A. J. ILES AND 588 OTHERS.

(MR. BRADNEY, CHAIRMAN.)

*Report brought up on the 31st July, 1913, together with Petition and Minutes of Evidence,  
and ordered to be printed.*

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## ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

*Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.*

THURSDAY, THE 3RD DAY OF JULY, 1913.

*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 this House all requisite information respecting their contents, and to report the same from time to time to this House, and to have power to report its opinions and observations thereon to this House; three to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. Bradney, Mr. Brown, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Dickson, Mr. Escott, Mr. Isitt, Mr. Malcolm, Mr. Payne, Mr. Robertson, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. FISHER.)

WEDNESDAY, THE 6TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1913.

*Ordered*, "That the name of Mr. Malcolm be deleted from the list of members of the Public Petitions A to L Committee, and that the name of Mr. Webb be substituted in lieu thereof."—(Hon. Mr. FISHER.)

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## REPORT.

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No. 85.—Petition of A. J. ILES and 588 Others, of Rotorua, praying that the Control of Acclimatization Matters in the Rotorua and Taupo Districts be taken from the Tourist Department and placed under a Local Acclimatization Society.

I am directed to report that, in view of the impending visit of the Canadian Fisheries Commissioner, this petition be referred to the Government for consideration.

31st July, 1913.

J. H. BRADNEY, Chairman.

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## PETITION.

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To the Honourable the Speaker and the Honourable the Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled.

THE petition of residents of the Town of Rotorua and settlers of the district comprising the Rotorua Acclimatization District humbly sheweth:—

That the Rotorua Acclimatization District, besides its other natural attractions, affords the finest trout-fishing in the Southern Hemisphere. This alone attracts large numbers of visitors from all parts of the world.

That the Rotorua Acclimatization District comprises some 7,000 square miles of country, and includes the Counties of Rotorua, East Taupo, and parts of the Counties of Whakatane, Wairoa, West Taupo, and Piako. The streams and lakes in the district teem with trout, whilst all native and imported game are also numerous.

That for the past four years the fish in the lakes around Rotorua have steadily deteriorated, all for the want of some definite, practical, scientific policy, and if allowed to go on the splendid fishing will soon be ruined.

That the district has been under the sole control of the Tourist Department for the last six years.

That Government control has proved a failure, as the present deterioration set in despite the fact that when such control was assumed the fisheries were in excellent condition.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Rotorua Acclimatization District be constituted a district under an acclimatization society, with all the powers vested in such bodies by virtue of the Fisheries Act Animal Protection Act, 1908, for the following reasons:—

That the district would be more efficiently served than at present, for the simple reason that persons living on the spot have more knowledge of the local conditions of fish and game than those in authority in Wellington, who have to depend on reports more or less vague.

That the suggested society would be composed of representatives of all parts of the district, acting in conjunction with various Rod and Gun Clubs throughout the district.

That an expert would be appointed to take over the whole management of fisheries and game, and that an efficient system of ranging would be established.

That such competent administration and efficient ranging would be obtained at less expense than the present unsatisfactory control costs, as members of the proposed society would give their time and knowledge gratuitously.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

A. J. ILES and 558 Others.

## LETTER.

The GENERAL MANAGER, Tourist and Health Resorts, to the CHAIRMAN, A to L Public Petitions Committee.

SIR,— Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, Wellington, 24th July, 1913.

Referring to the petition of Mr. A. J. Iles and others regarding the placing of the Rotorua Acclimatization District under the control of a local acclimatization society as opposed to the present control by the Government, I have the honour to submit the following:—

It is admitted that during the past few years the fish in the lakes have diminished in size, but the statement that this is on account of "some definite, practical, scientific policy not being pursued" is not in accordance with fact. The Government took over the control of the lake fisheries in 1907, and since that date has annually expended large sums in endeavouring to maintain and improve the condition of the fish. When it was discovered that the fish were diminishing in size steps were taken by the Government to ascertain the cause, and, if possible, to check it. In 1911 it was considered by expert officers of the Government that the worm disease affecting trout was a cause of their deterioration, and experiments were made with a view to ascertaining the cause of the disease, and, if possible, combating it. The experiments carried on by the veterinary officers of the Agriculture Department gave reason to believe that the disease was caused by parasite transmitted from the shag to the fish. Since that date the Tourist Department alone has expended some £500 in endeavouring to extirpate the shags, a reward of 2s. 6d. per head being paid for every shag brought to the office of the Conservator of fish and game at Rotorua. Within the last two months the Government has also employed men on Lakes Rotorua and Taupo to work around the shores of the lakes and destroy all shags. In addition to this, the Agriculture Department has had a special officer (Mr. Kerrigan) stationed for a long period at Rotorua continuing experiments, and Mr. Reakes, the Government Veterinarian, has also spent a considerable amount of time going into this matter at Rotorua. It is the intention of the Government to see that these investigations into the life-history of the parasite are vigorously continued.

Since the close of the last season the thinning out of fish on Lake Rotorua has been pushed on by the Department on the lines suggested by the Chief Inspector of Fisheries. Mr. L. F. Ayson, and the work in this direction was also commenced on the 1st of the present month on Lake Taupo. Altogether to date 1,795 "slabs" (ill-conditioned fish) have been destroyed by these means, and this work will be continued right up to the beginning of next season.

One contention is that the diminution in the size of the fish is caused by a lack of natural food-supply, and with the object of meeting this difficulty the Government has arranged to purchase a large supply of shrimps and to place them in Lakes Rotorua and Taupo during the coming season.

The Government is so fully alive to the importance of preserving this fishing as a national asset that it has recently made arrangements for Professor Prince, of Ottawa, who is acknowledged to be one of the world's authorities on the question of fresh-water fisheries, to visit the Dominion and report fully on the best methods for improving the trout-fishing. Professor Prince will arrive in New Zealand in September next.

It is stated in the petition that an expert should be appointed to take over the whole management of the fish and game, and that an efficient system of ranging should be established. In reply to this I desire to state that the whole of the control of the Rotorua and Taupo fisheries has recently been placed by the Government under the control of Mr. F. Moorhouse, who has had an experience of some five-and-twenty years in connection with acclimatization matters, and the Government is satisfied that in his hands full justice will be done to this important industry. The whole district will be thoroughly ranged by officers of the Tourist Department, and with the assistance of the members of the Rod and Gun Club, which the Government naturally expects, there seems to me no reason why there should be any lack of supervision in this direction. In this connection it might be mentioned that a number of honorary Rangers have been appointed throughout the district—five at Whakatane, one at Taupo, one at Whakarewarewa, two at Rotorua, and one at Tokaanu—and these gentlemen, in conjunction with the paid Rangers and officers of the Tourist Department, should be sufficient to satisfactorily meet all requirements.

As showing the activity of the Tourist Department, it may here be mentioned that since 1907 twenty-one deer, 410 pheasants, and seventy-two ducks have been liberated in different parts of this district, and no less a number than 6,500,000 trout-fry have also been liberated in the different streams and rivers in the acclimatization district.

In conclusion, I would point out that the expenditure by the Tourist Department in connection with the acclimatization matters in the Rotorua District has been as follows: 1907, £552; 1908, £699; 1909–10, £510; 1910–11, £935; 1911–12, £1,030.

I respectfully submit that it would not be possible for any local acclimatization society to expend anything like the amount which is now paid by the Government for the control of this important work.

I have, &c.,

B. M. WILSON,

General Manager.

The Chairman, A to L Public Petitions Committee.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, 24TH JULY, 1913.

ARTHUR JAMES ILES examined. (No. 1.)

1. *The Chairman.*] We shall be glad to hear what you have to say?—Before proceeding with my remarks may I hand in this additional list, containing thirty-two more names? It has come to hand since my arrival in Wellington. I have also a map showing the acclimatization district. [Document and map handed in.] I may say that the lake district was stocked in the first place by the Tauranga and Hawke's Bay and Auckland Acclimatization Societies about twenty years ago. The Auckland society did not appear on the scene till the last, and they stocked the district with rainbow trout about twelve years ago. About 1906 the residents of Rotorua petitioned Cabinet that we should be granted a separate charter as an acclimatization society. I had the honour of coming down with the petition, and it was presented to the Hon. Mr. McGowan. The Government, instead of giving control to the Rotorua residents, took it over themselves. They said the district was far too big for the Rotorua people to administer, and they took over the fisheries themselves. When we petitioned our intention was that the fisheries should be handed over to the local people. Quite recently the Internal Affairs Department have taken over our fisheries, and they are administering them with the same officers as the Tourist Department had. So we consider that we are in practically the same position as we were in in previous years. Mr. Moorhouse is acting as Conservator of Fish and Game in our district. It is stated in the official report that he has had twenty-five years' experience as far as game and fish culture is concerned. We do not think that Mr. Moorhouse has shown any very great ability as far as fish-culture is concerned up our way. Owing to want of experience on the part of the Tourist Department the attempts to weed out the poor-conditioned fish and to erect barriers to prevent the fish from going up streams have been an absolutely disastrous failure. Some three or four years ago, acting as one of the Rod and Gun Club, I went up, with five or six others. We were told that the streams had been effectively blocked and that they were going to grade out the fish. We went to these barriers that had been erected up the streams, and the water was washing over them about 1 ft. or 18 in. We asked for an explanation, and they said a fresh had come down the river and they had not allowed for it. Needless to say there was not one fish stopped from coming up the river that year. Some two years ago the Tourist Department erected wire netting at the mouth of practically every stream that discharged into Lake Rotorua. This also was to block the streams. We were assured that £250 had been spent. Mr. Ayson had been there previously, and he had reported that the barriers should be erected up-stream and that they should consist of wood. The Tourist Department considered that the amount he asked for—some £500—to successfully carry out this work was exorbitant, and that they could do it for very much less; and they spent—so they told us—£250 in erecting wire netting, which was absolutely the worst thing they could have used, because it gathers all the leaves and every fragment of stuff that comes down the stream. When they had got the wire-netting work completed—it took some weeks, and I have no doubt they spent the £250—they invited the members of the Rod and Gun Club to go out and see what had been accomplished. I think my friend Mr. Moorhouse was there, and Mr. Birks. We went at their invitation, I believe, on their launch. When we

got to the first barrier we did not trouble about getting out and having a look: we took their word for it that it was all right. At the second barrier I and another member of the Rod and Gun Club decided that we would get out and make an inspection of the barrier. I had wading-boots on, and in going along the barrier I put my foot in underneath it. It had scoured out. We went from one stream to the other and we found the same condition existing in every stream—that is, that a hole was scoured out underneath. Though they stated that the wire netting had been effective, we were quite certain that not one fish had been stopped from going up the stream that year. The idea, of course, was that they should be graded out. Mr. Ayson's report was that wood should be used up the streams, and traps made so that the fish could be run into them, and that the fish should be lifted out and the ill-conditioned ones thrown on one side and the others allowed to go out. The Tourist Department were going to stop every fish from going up-stream, but how they were going to grade them out we did not know. Some little time after that—probably two or three months—I was met in the street by Mr. Moorhouse, who informed me that he had succeeded in blocking the fish in the streams. I reported the matter to our club. The fish had then spawned, and in the interval, when the Department had found out that the wire netting which they had erected at the mouth of the streams had failed to accomplish the object, they decided that they would block the fish in the streams after they had spawned. When I reported that to the Rod and Gun Club, of course, they were astounded, because these fish were wanting to get out on to the feed so as to get back into something like condition again. We wired immediately to Sir Joseph Ward telling him how disastrous it would be. The season was then only something like six weeks from opening. We stated that it spelt ruination to our fisheries. We got word back that the Department had been instructed to pull the barriers down, on the advice of Mr. Ayson. Mr. Moorhouse assured me that there were thousands of fish blocked in the streams, and when I asked what his intention was he said that the idea was, when the season opened, to get them out and put them on the market. Of course, any one who knows anything at all about fishing and what a spawned fish is will quite understand the position in that case. Some years ago, when Mr. Donne was in charge of the Department, Mr. Ayson brought out from America some cisco-herring eggs. He had a great deal of difficulty in getting them. He brought a million out, and he took more care over those eggs than he did over the salmon consignment that he had on the boat. He landed them in Auckland in perfect condition. He passed them over to the Tourist Department. He sent down the jars with them, and letters of instruction as to how these eggs were to be hatched out, because they could not be hatched out in the ordinary way like trout-eggs—special jars were needed for the purpose. One of the Department's officers, or a gentleman paid by the Department—a Mr. Delatour, of Taupo—was brought down to receive them, because they had not got anybody in charge who knew anything at all about fish-culture. This gentleman, Mr. Delatour, was brought down to hatch out these cisco-herring eggs which had been gathered at great expense of time. It was a very important thing as far as New Zealand was concerned, on account of its providing a fresh food-supply for the trout. The cisco herring, I may mention, grows to about 9 in. or 10 in. long—sometimes a little longer—but when at the stage of 2 in. or 3 in. it is a very nice mouthful for trout. It is a very prolific fish, and under the microscope the stomach is found to contain nothing but the smallest animalculæ. No solid food is ever apparent in the stomach. It eats no fly-life, and destroys nothing in the shape of small fish in the water. So that the cisco herring would have been a great acquisition in our lakes. This was the only effort made to get the cisco herring out, as far as I know. Well, they never hatched out one fish: the whole consignment was lost. Some few years ago the Tourist Department went to the trouble of getting a few canfuls of shrimps up from the Waikato River, and that is about the only thing I can find that they have done in trying to improve the feed-supply. Mr. Ayson has been sent to the district to report—twice, I believe. He came to our district first of all on the 14th March—or made a report on the 14th March, 1910. He also wrote an important letter to the Resident Engineer in July, 1910. On the 17th September, 1912, he again visited our district; and I would like to ask, Mr. Chairman, whether it would be possible to get these reports and lay them before the Committee. I think those two reports will back up all the statements of myself and Captain Ryan, who are representing the people from the lake district.

*Hon. Mr. Fisher:* The Hon. Mr. Rhodes will have to produce those reports: they are in the Tourist Department.

*Witness:* They are most valuable. We have asked as a Rod and Gun Club in Rotorua for the production of these reports, and we had an assurance from Mr. Rhodes that had they been laid on the table of the House it would have been so disastrous to our fisheries that he was quite certain not an angler would have come into the district. He told us that some few months ago when in Rotorua.

2. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] How do you mean "disastrous"—in what way?—He gave us to understand that they would be of such a condemnatory nature as far as the fish were concerned that nobody would want to catch them or eat them. We do not know, because we have never seen these reports. The Department at the present time, I believe, are netting trout in Taupo and in Lake Rotorua. I have been present when fish have been brought in from Lake Rotorua, netted out of season, and those fish have simply been used for manure. They draw a net across the mouth of a stream, which I believe is not quite legal; the stream discharges into the lake, and where the fish are congregating they draw the net across at about the spawning-time, and I have seen something like six hundred and eight hundred fish lying down at the back of the works in Rotorua, and amongst them hundreds of beautiful fish weighing about 1 lb. There are certainly a percentage of bad fish, but they destroyed in those days—and I believe are doing so at the present time—all sorts and conditions of fish.

3. Who nets the fish?—I take it, the Conservator of Fish and Game does. Mr. Moorhouse is in charge, and he is responsible for the netting. They are doing so at the present time, I

believe, in Lake Taupo—destroying those beautiful fish. Our contention is that if the fish are going to be destroyed in that way they should be netted in the season, and that the fish should then be put on the market in either Auckland or Wellington; that it is quite possible to transport them, and that instead of having this fearful waste going on by pulling fish off the spawning-beds—as I believe they are doing at the present time in Taupo—and digging a hole and burying them, those fish should be allowed to spawn, and when they get back into condition there should be netting in all the lakes, and the fish should be put on to the market. That has always been our contention. Of course, it should be under proper control. We believe that no netting should be allowed within a certain limit—say, 300 yards or 400 yards—of where the other fishers are occupied. There is a fearful waste of trout taking place in the lake district owing to what we consider to be bad administration. I might mention in connection with the administration that it is not any personal matter. We are not attacking officers, or anything like that—it is the system. Our Conservator, for instance, came to Rotorua, I think, somewhere about four or five years ago. He came as a Ranger. He was a very efficient Ranger indeed. I do not think he professed to have any knowledge of fish-culture in those days. We had succeeded in getting a promise from Sir Joseph Ward that he would appoint a thorough expert from Canada. He told us so at a meeting of our Chamber of Commerce one night. While this gentleman was being sought for in Canada Mr. Moorhouse got a lift as far as his title was concerned, and he became Acting Conservator of Fish and Game. That was all right. That went along for quite a while. Then the appointment of the Canadian fish expert did not come off. They were unable to obtain such a man—the salary was too low, or they required too much from him, or something. Mr. Moorhouse then had the “Acting” struck off his title, and he became Conservator of Fish and Game, whereas in the first place he had simply been a Ranger amongst us.

4. What is he now?—Conservator of Fish and Game, and, I believe, with still greater powers. Some months ago the Hon. Mr. Russell was up in our district, and a deputation of four or five of the prominent fishermen went to him and met him in connection with ranging. We said that the place was being very badly served as far as ranging was concerned, that poaching of all sorts was rife, and we considered that in view of the size of the district, which comprised some 7,000 square miles, we should have another Ranger appointed. This had nothing at all to do with the Tourist Department: they never asked us to do anything; but we realized that there should be more efficient ranging. After some little talk he agreed to give us a Ranger. I think it was about six months ago that a Mr. Rutherford came along. We were very pleased indeed to see him, because we thought it would be a good thing. He came there, and he ranged all about. I think he was a very wideawake officer, always on horseback travelling about the country. I could see that he was quite wideawake to his work and was doing his best. He got to know the district fairly well in the six months of his appointment. Then we discovered just the other day that he was discharged, being told that the term of his appointment had expired—this after he had just got conversant with the district. The strange part about that is that he was no sooner out of the office than a Mr. Peter Graham—he was the Chief Guide at Mount Cook, I believe—came into the district. He is a very nice gentleman. I had seen him two or three years previously. I asked him, “What are you doing?” “Oh,” he said, “I am taking up Rutherford’s work. I am going to be a Ranger.” “But you do not know anything about our district,” I said. “No,” he replied, “but I hope you fellows will help me all you can.” I told him that we were disgusted about the Rutherford episode—that he should have just got accustomed to the district and then been put off.

5. What became of Mr. Rutherford?—He took another job, I believe.

6. He was not transferred?—No. He was an old Government servant. I met him two or three days ago, and he said he was absolutely sick of this last pill, as he called it, and had taken a private job. This appointment of Mr. Peter Graham to come up to spend two or three months amongst us till things were got right down at Mount Cook, I think, is very funny indeed. He has absolutely no idea at all of our district, of what is required, or even the rudiments of ranging. Let me give you some idea about the administration. When Mr. Robieson took charge after Mr. Doane left the Department he imposed a limit—not more than twenty-five fish or 50 lb. weight of fish should be taken out of the lake in any one day by an angler. I think most anglers know the great rate at which fish multiply, and that ordinary legitimate rod-and-line fishing would never clear them out: it would be impossible to get them down even. I spoke to Mr. Robieson about it. I said it was an absurd regulation altogether. He pulled out papers from his pocket and showed me statistics from England and Scotland and Ireland regarding different lakes which had had to be filled up again, and so on. I told him the conditions were entirely different out here in New Zealand—that where in these older countries they had thousands of anglers we had only dozens. He still persisted that it was the right thing, and that he would enforce it. He thought we were going too far altogether—that we would absolutely clear the lake out. And what is the result at the present time? The result is that the fish have deteriorated because they have become so numerous, and I have no doubt also the feed has gone down. The petition, I think you will find, has over six hundred signatures attached, with these additional ones that I have produced. I was the secretary of the local club up there, and in sending the petition forms out to the outlying districts I specially asked that no Maoris or visiting anglers should be allowed to sign, also that no ladies should be allowed to sign unless they were actually sportswomen. I said that we preferred to have a representative petition, that we only wanted male anglers within the acclimatization society; and we got over six hundred signatures. We have also received many letters of appreciation in connection with the whole thing. Would it be permissible to read any of those?

7. Mr. Dickson.] It would be better to hand them in and attach them to the petition?—Very well, I will do so. [Documents handed in.]

8. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] You said "letters of appreciation": appreciation of what?—Of our efforts to form a separate acclimatization society and get away from the control of the Tourist Department. I might mention that I noticed from the official report that £500 had been spent in the destruction of shags since the Department started paying about three years ago. The getting of this 2s. 6d. a head was not due to the Department at all. The Rod and Gun Club of Rotorua waited on Sir Joseph Ward. It took several hours' conversation with him to convince him that the shag was the cause of the parasite in the fish, and he finally consented to give us 2s. 6d. a head. The Tourist Department had absolutely nothing at all to do with getting that bonus of 2s. 6d. a head. It is now stated in their official report that £500 has been spent up to date. Well, I have a letter in my hand dated the 7th November, 1912—seven months ago—in which the resident officer in our district, in reply to an inquiry of mine, states that the total payments at 2s. 6d. per head up to that date were approximately £180: so that in the seven months since then they have spent £320. I cannot conceive it is possible that they should spend £180 in two or three years and then in seven months £320. I have practically concluded now. Captain Ryan and myself represent the residents—not the Rod and Gun Club of Rotorua, but the residents of the acclimatization district—and we are asking again for the local control of our fisheries. We asked some seven years ago for the control of our fisheries, and the Government stepped in and absolutely collared the district. They used our request as a lever to take the district from the control of the Auckland Acclimatization Society. We were asking for separation from Auckland, because we believed we could administer the district much better than the Auckland people could. Auckland was too far away. We are down here again this time asking to be separated from the Tourist Department.

9. *Mr. Dickson.*] Which is the greater evil?—I think we would willingly consent to go back to the Auckland Acclimatization Society—anything at all to get away from the Tourist Department. It is a bugbear as far as we are concerned. We are sure we could administer the district far better ourselves. Again, a society of this nature—an acclimatization society—I think you all know, gets a great deal of work done for nothing. You have enthusiastic members, and they take up the work of the society, and they practically do it for nothing. I know that when the Auckland society had charge of the district I used to go out. I liberated the first trout in Lake Tarawera and in three other lakes about Rotorua. I gave days and days of my time. And other gentlemen connected with sport did so also. We thought nothing of going out and spending a day or a couple of days. The carrying-people up there lent us coaches and drivers to go out and liberate fry. Everything was given free. Under the Tourist Department nothing is given free: it all has to be paid for. That is how it is we think that local control would be very much better.

10. *The Chairman.*] Do you agree with the departmental report as to the cause of the deterioration of the fish?—The shag? Oh, yes, we are quite at one there. I might mention in connection with that parasite that it was the efforts of the local Rod and Gun Club that first brought that about. In 1906 I sent the first fish down that had ever been sent away from our district suffering from the parasite. I sent it to Mr. Gilruth, and the reply I got back was to this effect: "Parasite dead. Can you send a fresh specimen?" That was long before the Tourist Department got charge—it would be about that time. We kept agitating when we found out there was a parasite there—we kept agitating the Department to get somebody else along; and finally we got Mr. Kerrigan, of the Agricultural Department, to come along, and he investigated the parasite there, and the local sportsmen gave a lot of assistance. I do not think the Department can claim any kudos at all for discovering anything at all about the parasite. It was practically the efforts of the local sportsmen.

11. How is the parasite conveyed—through the excreta?—Yes.

12. *Mr. Isitt.*] Have you any idea what the local revenue is from licenses?—We are not dealing with finance at all.

13. The Department have given evidence that they spent some £4,000 upon the fisheries in this district, and to my mind they make a point in stating that no local Gun and Fishing Club could possibly spend an amount of that sort?—I gave you the illustration about the barriers: that money was absolutely thrown away.

14. So far as my judgment goes you have made out a case of grave incompetence on the part of the man who is at present the head under the Tourist Department. Now, if you are to get the best effect in the district, would not every purpose be served if a competent man were put there by the Tourist Department and the Department and the Gun Club worked in harmony? Because you have had all these difficulties and this waste of money, does that mean it is absolutely impossible to get a competent man under the Tourist Department and that man working with you and in harmony with you?—It is not impossible, by any means.

15. Would not that be the better way out of the difficulty?—No. We feel we could administer it better ourselves, and at far less expense on account of the local enthusiasm.

16. Where are you going to get your money from?—There is a big revenue from licenses and the sale of ova.

17. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] What would your revenue be?—The year when the Auckland society lost our district and the Government took charge it was something like £800 for licenses only. That is not counting the sale of ova.

*Hon. Mr. Fisher.* Here are the figures: The Rotorua revenue for 1909–10 was £671, and for 1906–7 the Auckland society's revenue from fishing licenses was £633.

18. *Mr. Isitt.*] The Auckland society is still going on, I suppose?—Yes.

19. But you think you would have sufficient revenue to do the work that is wanted?—Yes. We contend that with efficient ranging and local enthusiasm licenses would be taken out which the people do not care anything at all about now, on account of its being a Government show.

20. Do you find that honorary Rangers are any good?—Yes. I do not think that under the Tourist Department or the Minister of Internal Affairs they would be, but under the local society they would.

21. *Mr. Dickson.*] Can you give us any explanation why none of the cisco-herring eggs were hatched?—They brought down a Mr. Delatour from Taupo, who absolutely did not know the least thing about them. Captain Ryan will go into that question, because he knows the man himself. All I know is that the eggs arrived there in splendid condition. Mr. Ayson had sent them with everything complete, and the eggs were passed over to the officer of the Tourist Department, and he failed to hatch out one egg. Captain Ryan will tell you why.

22. *Mr. Payne.*] Your whole trouble seems to have been brought about by an incompetent officer?—Yes, the system itself.

23. We are importing an expert from Canada?—Yes.

24. He will naturally see that he has competent officers under his charge?—He is only coming out to make a report.

25. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] I understood you to say that the cisco ova that Mr. Ayson brought to New Zealand arrived in good condition?—Yes.

26. Are you sure of that?—I had Mr. Ayson's assurance that it arrived in good condition—that he took more pains over these cisco-herring eggs than over all the salmon-eggs.

27. You may be surprised when you hear this: Mr. Ayson, when he arrived, telegraphed to the Superintendent of the Tourist Department and said, "Considerable loss cisco eggs during voyage. Put in eight days picking out dead eggs, but protracted voyage and rise temperature cool-storage chamber caused by breakdown engines hastened development and caused heavy loss later. Fair percentage good eggs still. Can only be successfully hatched out in jars. Afraid attempt hatch in trout-bags result in failure." And later on Mr. Delatour reported, "I regret to have to say that upon opening up the three cases delivered to me on Monday I found the ova in a very bad state, and I feel quite sure that I am quite within the mark when I say that 80 per cent. were bad (putrid)"?—Yes, I know that he did make a report to that effect.

28. You deny that they were bad?—Yes. Mr. Donne also thought so, and I believe he discharged Mr. Delatour almost at once when he realized he had bungled the whole thing. That was Mr. Delatour's excuse afterwards.

29. *Mr. Payne.*] Did I understand you to say just now that you saw those eggs and that they were in prime condition, and that Mr. Ayson said they were in prime condition?—No; I said I had Mr. Ayson's assurance that they had arrived in good order. The eggs would have to be opened at the hatchery. I was at the station, and I saw the eggs arrive there. They were not opened there. They had any quantity of ice about them. I think there were four or five sacks of ice accompanying them to ensure their being at the right temperature.

30. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] Was Mr. Delatour a permanent officer of the Tourist Department?—No. He was engaged by Mr. Donne to hatch out these eggs, I believe.

31. Then, his services being dispensed with after the job was finished, does not mean that he was "sacked" because the job was badly carried out?—Mr. Donne gave me to understand that he was so disgusted about the whole thing that he put Mr. Delatour off at once.

32. As a matter of fact he was engaged for the purpose of hatching out the eggs, and when the job was over that ended the matter?—I know that Mr. Donne was very disgusted about the whole thing.

33. Do you regard with any degree of satisfaction the proposal to import an expert?—Certainly. I think it is a splendid thing.

34. And if the expert recommends that the whole of the fish at Rotorua should be placed under some Government Department you will be satisfied with that?—I think it would be a mistake; I think that would be a mistake. I think his advice how to improve our fisheries would be very beneficial indeed.

35. You are prepared to agree with the expert provided he will agree with you?—No. I think that if he comes out to New Zealand all the acclimatization societies will very materially benefit by his experience.

36. Supposing he recommends the same control in New Zealand as there is in Canada—a Fisheries Department?—I believe that would be splendid.

37. Better than the Tourist Department?—Yes, because then they would have efficient men in charge; in fact, I might state that we have many times agitated to be placed under the Marine Department, but it has always proved a failure so far. We have three times asked the Government to place us under the Marine Department, because we believe Mr. Ayson would be a suitable man.

38. You cannot expect this Committee to make any specific recommendation until we have the report of the expert: that is a reasonable view to take, is it not?—The expert is simply going to give expert opinions on the State fisheries as he finds them at the present time.

39. And control, and everything?—Do you think so?

40. I know so, because I have made arrangements with him?—I was not aware that control was to be gone into at all.

41. *Mr. B. M. Wilson* (General Manager, Tourist Department).] With regard to the signatures to that petition: are you satisfied that all the people who signed are genuinely interested in fishing?—Yes; I feel fairly certain they are all interested in sport up there. Mind you, I sent the petition out to the outlying districts and simply got signatures from those people, sending a covering letter.

42. You do not know for certain that they are interested?—No, only that they are residents in our acclimatization district.

43. Barmen in hotels, and all sorts of people, I see, have signed it?—A lot of the barmen are keen anglers.

44. But are all these people license-holders?—I think a lot of them are. I am quite certain that barmen in hotels fish.

45. I would like to know if all the people who signed the petition take out licenses?—I should not like to venture an opinion as to that.

46. Are all the other parts of the district interested in this matter also?—Yes, excepting Whakatane. We had a reply back from Whakatane that they did not care to join us in this, because they said they were being treated very well. As a matter of fact, the Tourist Department were supplying them with a lot of ova and stocking their river, and they were fairly satisfied.

47. And the Tokaanu people?—As far as Tokaanu is concerned, we have had no signatures from there at all.

48. About the shags' heads: you will remember that you asked me what amount had been spent?—Yes.

49. I found it out for you. The figures I gave you were taken from the records of the Department—that £500?—I was simply citing Mr. Hill's letter written some months ago.

50. With regard to Mr. Graham, the Ranger there: do you know that he is a Ranger for the Canterbury society?—Yes, he told me he was.

51. He has already been three times in Rotorua acting there?—I know it is his second time, or probably his third.

52. Then he is not a stranger to the district?—He does not know anything about the district outside.

53. Mr. Graham has been up there netting for two seasons?—Yes.

54. Netting in the season—are you in favour of that or not?—Yes, provided that the nets are kept away from the streams.

55. Was it not the Rotorua Rod and Gun Club that waited on the late Prime Minister and got him to stop the netting when we were doing it in Rotorua?—Yes, because they were netting at the mouth of the streams.

56. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] Would you explain what the difference is between netting right at the mouth of the streams and netting elsewhere?—Where the river discharges into the lake the Auckland society many years ago put up a post 300 yards out from the mouth, and another 300 yards to the right, and another 300 yards to the left, and they said that nothing but fly fishing should take place within that area, and that no trolling should be allowed; yet the Tourist Department went and netted it—drew nets right across the mouth.

57. *The Chairman.*] With regard to the signatures on that petition, did you intend it to apply to sportsmen only?—No.

58. Every one in the district has an interest in the matter?—Certainly; but we were anxious to get all sportsmen.

59. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] Regarding the question of the cost to the district, I see there is an item of £292 for wages for 1909–10 at Rotorua. Your contention is that a great deal of the work which is now being paid for by the Department would be done voluntarily?—Certainly. At the present time I think there is rather a large staff up there. There are about six or seven people employed there in connection with the fish.

*Hon. Mr. Fisher* (to Mr. Wilson): Have you any idea what the cost is going to be this year, Mr. Wilson, up to the end of March?

*Mr. B. M. Wilson:* About £1,000, I think. It was £1,030 last year.

*Hon. Mr. Fisher:* That is double what it was in 1910?

*Mr. B. M. Wilson:* I think it will go up all the time.

60. *Mr. Escott* (to witness).] You recognize, with regard to the signatures, that although a great many of those people may not be anglers, the conservation of the fisheries would help on the district, and therefore they have an interest in the matter and are entitled to sign the petition?—Yes, I agree with that. If we had gone to any trouble we might have doubled the number of names.

CHARLES BRUCE MORISON, Barrister and Solicitor, Wellington, made a statement and was examined. (No. 2.)

*Witness:* I have for the last eleven years, not regularly, but as often as I could manage it, visited Rotorua and Taupo for fishing, and I can testify to what is uncontested, of course—that the fish have been steadily deteriorating during that time. I do not profess to offer any expert evidence on that part of the matter: it is not my sphere. But what I do desire to say is this: I have been an angler for something like forty-four years—since I was eight years old—and I have been associated with the Wellington Acclimatization Society for something like twenty-seven years, off and on—more on than off, as a matter of fact. I am now a member, and I am satisfied from my observations in the Hot Lakes district and from my knowledge of the methods of societies that the fish and game will be better conserved if under the control of an enthusiastic local society of keen sportsmen than they will be under any official. The men who devote themselves to this subject are lovers of it: they are enthusiasts. They study the question: they observe. They freely give their time for nothing, because it is a labour of love, and I feel certain that the control of the game and fish in any district will be better served by a body elected by the license-holders of that district than by any official. I desire to negative any imputation, or aspersion, or attack on any official whatever: I go on principle. I am speaking from experience in years gone by when the country wanted stocking. I was a member of the Wellington Acclimatization Society, which had ponds at Masterton, and I should think that probably for every hundred thousand fry the Government have hatched out we turned out millions. From Masterton we practically, directly and indirectly, stocked the whole of the North Island and the west coast of the South Island. There is this difficulty, of course: there is the question of how to combat degeneration. That is largely a question of science. I believe there is no one in



New Zealand at the moment who can offer quite a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. I incline to the view that a discriminate selection of the fish that go up the spawning streams is one of the solutions of the difficulty. I will offer this suggestion: when the fish are first turned out the fertilizing of the ova is done by young males necessarily. The result is that you get quick-maturing progeny from the young males. As the males grow older we find that the size of the fish is reduced. I do not believe it is wholly a matter of food-supply: I believe it is partly a matter of food-supply, but I believe that to allow only young males to go up the streams and fertilize the eggs is half the battle. Now, what apparently has been done is this: the blocking of the streams has not been done with any system at all. It has been attempted to be done, and a lot of money has been spent, and, I venture to suggest, utterly misspent. I venture to say that if you have a local society who are doing this work out of their revenue—that is to say, the licenses which are collected from sportsmen—and that is our revenue in Wellington, with a slight Government subsidy—the money will be spent to far better advantage under the control of the local men than it will ever be spent by Government officials. In many branches Government officials are the best administrators. In a branch of this kind I have absolutely no faith in them—I mean, in the system. In a matter of this kind you want the enthusiast, the observer, the man who feels that it is his job; the man who will give his time for nothing and who will see that every pound that is spent is made to go as far as possible. I am speaking now from my own experience of acclimatization matters, and I am confident that if you get this expert from Canada—which I sincerely hope will be arranged, and I understand is arranged—and let his instructions be carried out under the direction of a local society, there will be two results: you will get the work done infinitely better, and you will get it done at an infinitely lesser expense, than if you have to write Government cheques every time. The people of the district will co-operate; they will give their services for nothing, and you will create an *esprit de corps* in the district amongst the fishermen, which I am sure is being killed by the system of official administration. I am speaking from an intimate knowledge of the district, because I know Taupo and Rotorua well, and I know the fish well. I have caught good fish and bad fish, and I am sorry to say the bad ones are on the increase. Speaking as an acclimatization society member and a fisherman and—I hope—a sportsman, I say the public will be better served—the Dominion will be better served—by a local society of enthusiastic men who love the work. The money will go further and you will get better results than if you leave a matter of this kind to Government officials. I do not make any attack on any Government official, directly or indirectly, but I think the system of official management is inapplicable to this kind of thing. I should like to say that yesterday this question came up before the conference of acclimatization societies held in Wellington, and there was some discussion on this very question, and in the end the conference unanimously resolved that the control of the Rotorua-Taupo district would be better under a local society elected by the license-holders in the usual way than in the hands of the Government. The men at that table comprised some of the most experienced sportsmen we have in New Zealand. They come from all parts of the Dominion, and they resolved unanimously that in their opinion the interests of the Dominion would be better served by a local society having control than by having these fisheries continued under Government management.

1. *Mr. Payne.*] Do you not think that as the Government are getting out an expert to deal with this matter it would be wrong to grant the control to a local society?—I think there is some little misunderstanding. I believe that this is the only sporting district in New Zealand which is not under the control of a local society. What the local people desire to do is not to take the control out of the hands of an expert, but to be the men who will carry out the expert's instructions.

2. What I suggest is that we should wait until that expert is out here and then see what he suggests?—He will be an expert as to the fish, as to the disease, as to the steps to be taken; but the question is, Who are to take those steps, and who will do the work more efficiently? And that will probably be a question he will not answer.

3. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] You know that Professor Prince is coming out?—Yes. I am delighted to hear it.

4. You do approve of that?—I urged Mr. Rhodes some time ago to see that it was done. I felt it was absolutely necessary that we should get some one who is an expert to deal with this question of deterioration. My opinion, as I have said, is that it is partly a question of food-supply, but far more than that it is a question of enabling the ova in the rivers to be fertilized by young males. It is a principle in the breeding of all animals that if you breed from young, healthy sires you get quick-maturing progeny, and then the food-supply goes twice as far. That is my own personal view of the matter from observation; but I do not set up as an expert on that. But I do say that in the spending of money and in the carrying-out of instructions your societies will do better work than officials.

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Captain THOMAS RYAN examined. (No. 3.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you proceed, please?—I think Mr. Iles has gone over a great deal of the ground which I intended to cover, so I shall deal mostly with the Taupo end of the district. Taupo originally was stocked with brown trout by the Hawke's Bay society twenty years ago. It was then left in a state in which the fish grew: they increased, and were a very fine lot of fish, so much so that about thirteen years ago it was thought it was quite time to get rid of some of the fish that were there. They then issued a license to me to net the fish. I paid £2 per annum for the right of netting them. The first year I got a fair number of splendid fish, both brown trout and Lake Leven trout.

2. *Mr. Isitt.*] What weight?—Anything from 12 lb. to 18 lb. Owing to the means of communication that we had at that time we could not send them away. I just gave them to the local residents and the Natives: that was the only use we could make of them. I may say that we could not catch the brown trout with the fly—they would not look at it. After that I suggested to Mr. Earl, the president of the Auckland Acclimatization Society, the idea of stocking Lake Taupo with rainbow trout, as they were a better sporting fish and people would go and catch them in the daytime. At that time they were catching brown trout in the Tongariro River with a minnow. Some fish caught there at that time weighed as much as 26 lb. and 27 lb. That was really the fishing that brought Taupo prominently before the public, because some of the tourists who came there camped at Tokaanu and caught these huge fish and made a great song about them. I saw Mr. Earl, and got him to stock Lake Taupo with the rainbow. They sent up some through the Hawke's Bay society. They were liberated about the year 1903. In 1904 Mr. Earl sent up some from the Auckland society, and they were sent to me. The whole of this business, I may say, was carried out at no cost at all to anybody. I arranged with an official of the Rotorua Motor Coaching Company to receive them at Rotorua, and they were brought on to Taupo for nothing by Mr. J. Crowther, of Taupo; and each morning as they came along I distributed them in my steamer to all the rivers and streams. In 1905-6, I think, with what the Auckland society sent me and about 80,000 fish that I myself reared at my own expense, we liberated altogether about 220,000 fish in Lake Taupo. So anybody can see that the lake was pretty well stocked. I believe the experts say that in their natural state the fish increase at the rate of about 5 per cent., while under artificial means they say that as much as 95 per cent. of the ova come to maturity. So if you take into consideration the fact that a quarter of a million of fish or thereabouts have been liberated and allowed to increase and multiply in the way they have been doing for the last nine years and a half, you will have some idea of the extraordinary number of fish that are in the lake. At the present time we are taking out, I suppose, about six thousand or seven thousand fish by means of all the anglers. I did not know we were going to have an exhaustive meeting like this or I could have brought down the figures. I have kept a tally of the catches, so that every year I have been able to form an idea as to the exact condition of the fish and how they are going down in weight. For the last three years I must say there has been a most marked diminution indeed. If I may be allowed I will put in some photographs as evidence of the state of the fish for the last three years. They show representative catches made at the best time of the year when the fish are at their very best—during the months of March, April, and May. I and others at Taupo represented to Sir Joseph Ward and Sir John Findlay and others who come up there annually to fish that the fish were steadily deteriorating, and that some drastic means should be taken to abate the evil. They promised all sorts of things, but nothing has been done. I applied for money from the Tourist Department some few years ago to exterminate the shags. That was when Mr. Robieson was in charge. He sent me up the munificent sum of £4 one time. When I asked for more money he sent £3. And then he said no money was available. That is how the shags got along at Taupo. When I first liberated the fish there the Auckland Acclimatization Society provided me with from seven hundred and fifty to about a thousand rounds of ammunition every year for a visit to the rookeries. I went with my steamer, taking men with me, and we practically exterminated the shags in the largest bay. If anybody takes the trouble to go round there he will not find more than about a hundred shags, and they are so wild that you cannot get anywhere near them. The Tourist Department in the past have made absolutely no efforts to cope with the natural increase of the fish, but just left it to the few fishermen to get a few tons of fish out. Many reports have been circulated about fish being wasted up there by the fishermen, but these reports in most cases are not accurate. The fishermen do certainly get a great deal of fish, but when fish are wasted it is probably due to the weather, as in the month of February the fish are fine and fat and will not keep any length of time, and if the launches cannot get away and get them into Taupo for distribution the fish must go bad, and consequently they have to bury them; but when it is possible the launches bring them away and distribute them. I may say that the Tourist Department erected a smoke-house at Tokaanu a couple of years ago, and they asked me if I would supply them with surplus fish—with any fish wasting around the camps. I told the men about it, and they pointed out that they had no say in the matter, as these British tourists hired the launches from me and they were practically their property for the time being. But I said to the men, "If you get a chance at any time to take the fish down, do so." The very first time they got an opportunity was when a man named Clark on one of the launches got about eighty-six fish, and he took them down to Tokaanu to the smoke-house. When he got down there the man in charge had a look at the fish and took about three dozen out of the eighty-six—all magnificent fish. The man asked what he was going to do with the balance. He was told "I do not know; you have got too many for me; you can do what you like with them." So he took them away to the Maoris and distributed them at a village about a mile and a half away. When he came back and told me, I said, "If that is the way they treat you, the best thing you can do is to take no more fish to them." They were offering then the sum of 1d. a pound, and they were selling the fish at 8d. a pound. These were all splendid fish—no weeds among them. As regards what Mr. Iles said about the cisco herring, I may say that I got a wire from Mr. Donne asking me to go across the lake and bring Mr. Delatour over to take charge of these cisco herrings. I went across specially with the steamer, a distance of twenty-six miles, and saw Mr. Delatour, and he said he had got instructions from Mr. Donne to go down. I said, "I have got the steamer here and am waiting for you." He said, "I do not know what to do about it. I do not know anything about the cisco herrings. I do not know whether they are fresh-water fish or salt-water fish, or what they are." I said, "Are you coming?" He said, "It is of no use my going." I said, "If you are not coming I will go away back," He said,

"Wait a minute. I suppose I had better go." So he came along with me and went down, and he told me on his return that the cisco herrings were a failure. That is all I know about it. As regards the work the Tourist Department have done round Lake Taupo, they have spent £7 on the destruction of shags there through me. They spent, I think, £16 on clearing the banks of the Tongariro River. That was due really to the fact, I think, that Lord Plunket was going up there to fish, and they wanted to clear a bit of the river-bank for him. We had asked to have money expended on clearing the rivers for the fishermen—I may say that Mr. Crowther at his own expense cleared the banks of the Waikato River for about three miles to accommodate the fishing-people; yet when we ask that the banks of the river should be cleared there is no money available—unless the Governor is going to fish there. Last year one English tourist who comes out every year represented that the fishing would be improved on the Waitahanui River if snagging were done and the banks cleared a bit. I understand the Department sent £10 there to be expended. I maintain that if there is such a big revenue accruing from the fishing at Taupo—as there must be from the licenses sold—it surely ought to be worth while to spend a little money on the place and try to improve it for the benefit of the overseas anglers. They come here for the sport, and they get the cheapest sport in the world.

3. *The Chairman.*] I think you are getting away from the question: you are hardly speaking to the petition. Our time is limited, and we want you to confine yourself as much as possible to the petition?—I was trying to show that the control in the past has been bad.

*Mr. Isitt:* Suppose we admit that the control has been bad, it will not affect the position. The thing is what we are to do in the future. That is what we want to get evidence about.

4. *Mr. Dickson.*] I take it the Committee are satisfied that the control has not been satisfactory, and we should like you now to make some suggestions as to how we could improve the control—how it could be improved by your society taking charge?—As regards improvement, I think it is a very good idea indeed to get a fishing expert from Canada. I have no doubt that when he comes he will give us a remedy. Mr. Ayson, who has visited the district for the last three or four years, has come up there in connection with the state of the fish. He has given a pretty good report, and I should think that Professor Prince, when he comes along, will practically endorse all that Mr. Ayson has said. As regards future working, that is a matter to be considered. We as enthusiasts and residents in the district have given a great deal of our time in the past to it, and I have no doubt we shall do so in the future. We will do all we can to help the thing along, because it is to our interest to help it, and it is to the Government's interest to pull in with us. I think that if the Government are still to have control the local people ought to be represented somehow.

5. *Mr. Isitt.*] You say that in the earlier days you used to get fish weighing 20 lb. and 26 lb.: do you think that if you got control in place of the Tourist Department you could bring those weights up again?—I do not think so—not to that size—because we would have to restock the lake, and that would take some years.

6. Do you know any fishing-place in New Zealand where there has not been a steady diminution in the size of the fish?—It appears to me that the whole of the fishing has been let go.

7. Take Canterbury: is it not a fact that in any district you weed out the big fish and that they do not grow at anything like the rate at which you catch the big fish? And, more than that, the success that attends your stocking necessarily limits the size of the fish: the more fish there are in the water the less chance there is of fish attaining abnormal size?—That is so.

8. So while you may have certain charges to make against the Tourist Department you cannot hold them responsible for the fact that that happens in your district which happens in every district—that there is a steady diminution of the big fish: that must follow, must it not?—It would not follow if they were to take the fish out and cope with the natural increase.

9. How long does it take to grow a 26 lb. fish?—We were getting rainbow trout four or five years afterwards running up to 18 lb. or 19 lb.

10. But brown trout?—I could not say about them. They had been in some time—nine or ten years—when I caught them of that size.

11. There has been a certain amount of irritation, no doubt, between the local anglers and the Tourist Department. Do you think it would not be better if you could hit upon a working agreement and get a real expert there? Would you not be more likely to succeed if you had the Government backing you up and finding large sums of money, which undoubtedly must be spent on a huge district of that kind, than if you had to paddle your own canoe?—No; I think we can paddle our own canoe very well.

12. Where would you find the money? If the Government spend £1,030 this year on the ordinary working, and your income is £670, how are you going to cope with that expenditure?—First of all, we should have the fishing-license money—

13. That is the £670?—In the second place, we should have the ova to sell; then there is the sale of fish, which is a very big item?—£1,000 to £2,000 if properly handled.

14. *The Chairman.*] It is being wasted now?—Yes, absolutely. If we could get those fish and handle them as they ought to be handled there is no telling what the revenue would be. We could undertake to deliver those fish fresh in Auckland or Wellington.

15. *Mr. Isitt.*] About Rangers: is it not a fact that every angler who holds a license is supposed to do Ranger's work?—Yes.

16. In Canterbury we have a Ranger, and the paid Rangers, no matter how energetic they are, absolutely fail to deal with the poaching: so how are your honorary Rangers going to do it?—They would take an interest in it.

17. So do the anglers down in Christchurch, yet they are absolutely impotent?—Up our way things have been very lax in that direction because the people recognize that the fish ought to be taken out.

18. *Mr. Dickson.*] Do you not consider you are in a much better position as honorary Rangers up there than they would be in Canterbury? In Rotorua and your own district a lot of the residents depend solely on the tourist traffic. Would not that make the honorary Rangers more interested in the work than is the case in Christchurch, where only a few gentlemen go in for the sport?—It would, because our grounds are so limited.

19. You cannot compare the two districts?—Not at all.

20. If there were proper supervision over the fish they could be increased considerably in size over what they are at present?—In Taupo we maintain about the same average—about 6 lb. or 7 lb. The quality of the fish is what you want to strive for.

21. You consider you could do that better under a local society than under the Tourist Department?—I think so.

22. *Mr. Robertson.*] You spoke about a particular individual taking a number of fish down to the smoke-house and a great number being rejected: what was the reason for that—was it lack of accommodation?—The answer of the man was that the man in charge told him he could not do with them. He just took out what he wanted. I may say that the smoke-house down there is only a small affair.

23. Probably it would be owing to the small size of the smoke-house?—It may have been. At the same time I have seen tourists smoking the fish splendidly in packing-cases and making a first-class job of it too. It is the method. The last year the smoke-house there was a bit of a failure. They put the fish in there and they sent them to Wellington, and I believe they turned out absolutely rotten when they got here, so the smoke-house was closed up. They said they could not deal with the Taupo trout—they were too fat. That was the reason I got.

24. *Mr. Payne.*] It seems to me that all that is necessary is to establish an efficient smoke-house system. From my little knowledge the fish were not half smoked—they were not properly treated as smoked fish?—I do not think those that the Tourist Department did the season before last were properly treated, because they had to close the smoke-house up and said they could not treat the fish, yet the local people were treating them and sending them away.

25. *The Chairman.*] Do you think that if you had the right to sell fish a profitable market could be established there without detriment to the fishing sport—that is, if, instead of the fish being wasted, it was sold in the open market during the open season?—Oh, certainly.

26. You think it would be an advantage to the district and the public generally?—Certainly.

27. *Mr. Isitt.*] Would the post take them all over New Zealand?—Yes.

28. Then you would affect other fishing?—But they are posted now.

29. *The Chairman.*] In reference to the Government launch, in your opinion was it a necessity there?—No, absolutely not.

30. How many launches had you on the lake when that launch was imported?—There are about thirty or forty on Lake Rotorua and about eleven or twelve on Taupo.

31. What was the launch imported for—what was she to do?—I understand, just to take the men round to the different parts of the lake—to these rivers, and land them there for the purpose of netting.

32. Had the Department any other boat at the time?—Not on Taupo.

33. What did they do?—They did not approach me in any way. I do not know whether they approached any other owners.

34. *Mr. Payne.*] Would it be possible for the Tourist Department to prosecute their business without having a boat of their own on the lake?—Yes.

35. Then how could they get about the water to inspect, and so on?—By hiring one.

36. By that, then, you admit that they need a launch?—Yes.

37. It is purely a question whether owning or hiring a launch would be cheaper?—Yes.

38. Do you admit that a launch is needed?—They could do it with a rowing-boat if they go to the nearer rivers.

39. They need a boat of some kind?—Yes; but it is not absolutely necessary.

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LIONEL HANLON, of Whangarei, examined. (No. 4.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you proceed, please?—I speak merely as an angler who goes to Taupo every year to fish. I have done so for five years, and I have noted, of course, the diminution or degeneration in the size and quality of the fish, as every angler going there has done. Anglers in the camps there are always talking about it and saying, overseas men especially, that the fishing in Taupo is practically done, and that probably they will not come again owing to the poor fishing they are getting. This is a serious matter, because it is estimated that the anglers from overseas leave anything from £16,000 to £20,000 a year in the Dominion. From that point of view it is of importance, and as an advertisement it is of importance, that the fishing should be kept up to the standard. We have complained, as anglers on the Tongariro especially, of the Department not clearing the banks of the river so that we can get along. We think that part of the license-money might be spent on that. There are miles of the river-bank that is practically impassable. There has been some £16 spent on clearing what is known as the Islington Promenade, and a couple of hundred yards up, by Major James's pools, and that is all that has been done in clearing the banks. In regard to the size of the fish it is the opinion of many anglers that the cause of the falling-off in size is the breeding of the fish—that they breed from the poor fish. They get the large fish at the end of the season. They think that the season should be closed sooner. They think that May should be a close month instead of an open month, because the best fish are going up to spawn then. The early spawners go up first, and these

are killed by the anglers; and we are told that they are killed in the spawning-grounds by the Maoris in very great numbers. And naturally, if the breeding is from poor stock, the stock as a whole must degenerate.

2. *Mr. Isitt.*] Supposing it is admitted that there has been incompetence so far as the administration of the Tourist Department in the past is concerned, do you think that the best results could be obtained by the Government, with an enthusiastic expert working in conjunction with the local men, and with the Government purse at its disposal, or by leaving the control absolutely to the local people? Given that we had a really good enthusiast instead of an incompetent, do you not think that better work could be done by the Government and its purse than by the local men?—I am inclined to think so.

3. *The Chairman.*] Then you would not favour the Department giving control to the local body? Speaking as an angler you think that the fishing would be better under the control of the Department if a good man were got?—Provided there was a great change from the present administration. I do not believe in the present administration.

JOHN CAMPBELL PEACOCK, Solicitor, Wellington, examined. (No. 5.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Proceed, please?—I appear on behalf of the Native owners of the lands in the East and West Taupo covered by this petition. I wish, first of all, to make one or two remarks about the petition itself. It would appear from the petition that there is a Rotorua Acclimatization District, comprising 7,000 square miles, and the prayer of the petition is that "the Rotorua Acclimatization District be constituted a district under an acclimatization society with all the powers vested in such bodies by virtue of the Fisheries Act Animal Protection Act, 1908." Now, there is no such Act, to begin with. There is a Fisheries Act, 1908, and there is an Animals Protection Act, 1908. Under the Animals Protection Act, 1908, there is power for the constitution of acclimatization societies, and it is provided that where acclimatization societies have been constituted the property in the game and birds should be vested in such society, but that in the case where the district is under the control of the Tourist Department the property in the birds and the game should be under the control of that Department. Then we come to the Fisheries Act. There is no mention made in the Fisheries Act of the acclimatization society at all, except the power in the Fisheries Act for land to be acquired for the purpose of hatcheries and for the control of those hatcheries to be vested in an acclimatization society. The Animals Protection Act deals only with game and birds, and in the Fisheries Act there is no power for the control of fish or anything to be handed over to any acclimatization society at all. Therefore I say that what is asked by the petitioners is impossible at the present time, and could only be given effect to by fresh legislation. I submit, therefore, that this petition could not be entertained. The Maoris whom I represent are the owners of practically the whole of the land of East and West Taupo surrounding Lake Taupo, and comprising a very large area indeed, and, of course, they would be naturally affected by any change which might be made in the present control of the fish, and also of game, because their lands are the lands which would largely be shot over, and from their lands the fishing would take place. I am instructed that at the present time the relationship between the Natives and the Tourist Department is of the very best, and I am here to-day to object on their behalf to any change of control, which in the opinion of the Natives would possibly lead to friction between any local society and the Natives themselves. It is evident that there has been incompetence in the manner in which the fish have been treated, but I would submit that, in view of the fact that an expert is being obtained, and after the representations that have now been made that could be quite easily cured.

2. *Mr. Dickson.*] What is the relationship between the Maoris and this supposed society—the people there?—There is no existing society. The society would no doubt be comprised mostly of local residents, and you can quite imagine that as the Maoris own nearly all the land round the lake—and the question is being litigated as to whether the lakes themselves do not belong to the Natives—friction might arise. At present there is a perfectly good feeling between the Department and the Natives.

3. *Mr. Payne.*] Under the Treaty of Waitangi are not the fishing rights of Natives at Taupo fully conserved?—I presume that they would be under the Treaty of Waitangi. That is so, no doubt. At the present time the Natives are perfectly satisfied with what is being done, and are quite willing to assist the Government in the way of permitting—and they have permitted—all these oversea visitors to fish from their lands. All these camps are erected on the lands of the Natives. The owners of the tents get rent for them, but the Natives never get a rent at all. They are quite satisfied to let the present state of things continue. They are afraid there would be difficulty and friction if local control were granted, arising out of access to the lands.

4. If this society came into being the Natives would have a perfect right to bar visitors from their lands?—I am not prepared to answer that question. It would depend upon what power was given by legislation. There is no power for such a society to be formed at the present time.

5. They could not at present debar these tourists from going on their land?—They do not do it, at all events.

6. They are prepared to do as they are doing now so long as they are left alone?—Yes.

7. But if they are interfered with they may assert their legal rights?—They may do that.

8. *Mr. Escott.*] Have you any proof to put before us that you are acting for the Natives?—The leading member of the tribe is outside in the passage now.

*Captain Ryan:* You made a statement about the revenue from the camps. I may state that I lease the lands from the Natives—practically the whole of the land round the lake-shores. And as regards putting up camps and paying for nothing and trespassing on the land—that I do not do. I pay an annual rental.

*Witness:* I did not suggest that you personally did, but I understand that all the others are not in the same position.

*Captain Ryan:* I pay the Natives anything from £80 to £90 per annum for the right to put camps there.

*Witness:* There are other people than yourself who have camps.

*Mr. Hanlon:* I should like to say that the Natives on the Tongariro River charge us so-much a week and get a very good revenue.

C. K. WILSON, M.P., examined. (No. 6.)

*Witness:* Mr. Hes has asked me to speak as one who has always taken a great interest in acclimatization societies. I think there is no doubt that an acclimatization society would be the best means of governing this district. Take the revenue at £671. I know that during the last twenty-five years, if I were paid for the work I have done it would run into hundreds of pounds. I know all my fellow-members, and wherever there is an acclimatization society there is a keen desire to help the society. An enormous amount of work is done for nothing. £600 under an acclimatization society would be better than £1,500 under the Tourist Department. I am not saying anything against the control, but I am strongly of opinion that if a society of this sort can be formed the administration will be cheaper and better, and it will be a direct benefit to the district.

1. *Mr. Payne.]* Do you not think that a sportsman's instinct pervades the people in acclimatization societies, and that if the Government were to continue to have charge of that district the sportsmen would assist the Government?—I do not think that any Department of the State can control this sort of thing as well as an acclimatization society. Visiting sportsmen will pay their license fees and will think that is quite sufficient, but the local people would do all they could, more particularly in this district, because the greater portion of their revenue is derived from people who come into the district as fishermen, and every one is benefited in that way, and therefore they would help. I know that I have spent days and days in distributing fish. The Tourist Department cannot get any one to do that. At Te Kuiti at the present time I have offers from people to distribute fish. It is all done from a desire to help the district along. That is why I am advocating an acclimatization society having control.

2. *Mr. Robertson.]* Have you done anything up at Taupo?—Not at Taupo—at Rotorua.

3. *Mr. B. M. Wilson.]* You were at Taumarunui?—Yes.

4. How do the Tourist Department treat the Taumarunui society?—I believe that the local people govern the thing best. I am not condemning the Tourist Department in any way.

5. We have given the Taumarunui society, since 1908, 875,000 ova?—I do not say you have not.

FREDERICK MOORHOUSE, Conservator of Fish and Game, Rotorua, examined. (No. 7.)

1. *The Chairman.]* Proceed, please?—I should like to say a few words in reply to these allegations of incompetency. In 1907 the control of the acclimatization work was handed over to the Tourist Department, and I will read the letter that was written by the Rod and Gun Club on the Department taking over control: "Immediately upon the publication of the intentions of the Government, the council" (of the Auckland Acclimatization Society) "decided to approach Parliament on the matter. A petition was prepared, setting forth the history of acclimatization in Auckland, and showing the work done by the society since its formation, also fully explaining the disastrous results which would probably ensue if the proposals were carried out. The petition had the cordial support of practically the whole of the acclimatization societies in New Zealand, and it was most actively backed up by public feeling in the society's own district, every local committee affiliated with the society supporting it. The petition was duly referred to the Petitions Committee, and a member of the council of the society proceeded to Wellington to give evidence in support of it. The Committee impartially considered the question, and took evidence on both sides, unanimously reporting as follows: 'This Committee, having considered the evidence, is strongly of opinion that the proposal to subdivide the Auckland Acclimatization District, being opposed to the best interests of acclimatization and sport, should not be given effect to, and recommend the Government to grant the prayer of the petition.' It was anticipated that such a report of a parliamentary Committee would at least induce the Government to delay action in the matter. Instead of this, an Order in Council was issued at the end of January constituting a Rotorua Acclimatization District, and placing its management and revenues in the hands of the Tourist Department."

*The Chairman:* This was the recommendation of the Petitions Committee: "This Committee, having carefully considered the evidence, is strongly of opinion that the proposal to subdivide the Auckland Acclimatization District, being opposed to the best interests of acclimatization and sport, should not be given effect to, and recommend the Government to grant the prayer of the petition."

*Witness:* That is so. The Government then realized, I take it, that the Tourist Department was capable of handling this matter, and they handed it over to that Department. Then, at the first annual meeting of the Rod and Gun Club that was held afterwards this is what the

chairman stated in his report: "In my last report you will doubtless remember that I informed you that the Government had given its assurance that the whole of the Rotorua district fisheries, &c., would be placed under the control of the Tourist Department and a separate district proclaimed. In spite of the storm of opposition raised by the Auckland society against this being done the separation has been brought about, and subsequent events have amply proved that the move was a wise and just one in the interests of our district. It will be gratifying to you all to learn that since assuming this control the club is now practically an advisory board to the Department, the services of the council being cordially accepted by the Government. This has resulted in your council being consulted," and so on.

2. *The Chairman.*] What is the date of that?—This was the 1908 report of the club.

3. How long was it written after the Tourist Department had taken over control?—We took it over in February, 1907, and in 1908 this was their report.

4. They had not felt the effect of it by that time?—But Mr. Iles said, I understood, that it was taken over on the understanding that it was to be handed over to the Rod and Gun Club.

*Mr. Iles:* No.

*Witness:* Then I have misunderstood him. Now, gentlemen, with regard to the "incapacity." It is always a very difficult position to place a man in when he is asked to prove his capability, but I must do the best I can for myself. I have been connected intimately with acclimatization work for twenty-four years. During that time I have handled deer, fish, birds, and big game. During the early part of my career with the acclimatization society I was yearly for ten years connected with fish. Through practically the whole of the North Island I was dealing with trout. I was sent by the Government to make an importation of big game from America, and I made the most successful importation of big game that was ever brought from America. The second time I was sent off to bring back a consignment of moose, and I landed them in this country without the loss of one. A year or two back the Government had engaged the Commissioner of Fisheries and Game in California to bring through a shipment of moose, and he lost all but two, yet I landed mine in New Zealand without loss. I have handled large shipments of quail brought by the acclimatization society. I also handled large shipments of opossums that were liberated all over New Zealand. Further than that, the Government imported from America a number of McKinnor trout. These were sent to Christchurch to be hatched out for liberation in Lake Kanieri. The time passed when they should have been liberated, and Mr. Seddon was pressed by the Hokitika society to have these fish turned out. Mr. Ayson was asked to report on the possibility of getting these fish to Lake Kanieri. He reported that it was impossible to move them on account of their size. The curator of the Christchurch ponds, who had reared these fish, said it was impossible to move them. The secretary of the society, Mr. Righton, represented to the Government that it would be better to leave these fish in Christchurch and let them breed there again and hand over the ova to the Hokitika society. Mr. Seddon gave orders the fish had to go, and Mr. Donne said to me, "Go to Christchurch and take those fish to Hokitika." I went down to Christchurch and saw the fish. I was told then by the secretary and the curator that it was impossible to take them. Well, I landed every fish except two at Lake Kanieri, against the opposition and the pressure that was brought to bear to prevent the fish from being moved. After being with the Government for some time I was transferred to Rotorua as a result of the representations of the Rod and Gun Club regarding the enormous amount of poaching that was going on. I was sent specially from my position of Inspector for the Tourist Department to report on their representations. I arrived in Rotorua, and found that everybody was poaching—everybody.

5. *Mr. Isitt.*] The members of the fishing club?—The members of the Rod and Gun Club. Everybody was poaching. Fish were being eaten in the boardinghouses out of season. People were dealing illegally with fish in every direction. I prosecuted them. Now I ask you to take note of the revenue. In 1907-8, the first year of acclimatization work by the Department, the revenue receipts were £503, and the total expenditure was £552. In 1908-9 the receipts were £669 and the expenditure £699. I came on in 1910. In 1909-10 the receipts were £671. I had only been a few months in charge then. Then a jump took place under my control. For 1910-11 the receipts rose to £962. For 1911-12 they were £1,053. The rise was made up from the increase of licenses in the district. For 1911-12 the receipts were made up as follows: Fishing licenses, £631 11s. 2d.; sale of trout ova and fry, £114 9s.; sale of smoked fish, £92 14s.; fines, £1 9s.; game licenses, £196 1s. 6d.; fines, £17 7s. This only goes up to March, 1912. I may say there have been a great many fines since.

6. We should like to hear from you about the wire netting?—About the barriers. In 1908 a report was handed in by Mr. Ayson as to what should be done for the improvement of the fish. The fish were suffering from a parasite. [Specimens produced in bottles.] One of these is the worm, and the other shows the way the fish are affected. It bores in the stomach of the fish. In 1909, after his report had been submitted to the Government, the Tourist Department decided to erect barriers at the mouth of the rivers in accordance with his suggestions, but on account of the peculiar formation of the bottom of the rivers, which are composed of very light pumice, Mr. Birks, who is one of the leading engineers in connection with the waterworks, decided to erect wire netting instead of posts. To carry out Mr. Ayson's idea was an impossibility. He had not gone into the matter in a thorough, businesslike way; for any obstruction whatever—it does not matter whether it is wire netting or post—erected in the pumice bottoms will cause a scour out, and scour so badly that it is impossible for anything to hold. The wire-netting barriers held successfully for a time—absolutely successfully—never mind what statement you have heard. I will tell you why they were not a success. The land round Rotorua is Native land. Objection was raised by the Maoris to having these barriers placed there, thus stopping them from going up and down in their canoes. A swing-gate had to be placed on the first big river that runs



into Lake Rotorua—just as you would put a gate on a paddock—in order to allow the Natives to go in and out. The result was that no attempt was made to shut the gate to stop the fish from going up and down, and in consequence the barrier was washed away; but we did the best we could by blocking it. The next river that was blocked was a small one. That scoured away on account of the formation of the ground. Posts 13 ft. in length were driven into the ground, and yet they were left swinging. At the next river the Maoris deliberately pushed their canoes through the netting, and we could not deal with the matter at all. We certainly did the very best we could under the circumstances to try to handle the fish there. That is the true position. The barriers were not a success through no fault of the Department: the men were working night and day to try and block them, yet the barriers would not hold.

7. *Mr. Escott.*] There is no known system of barriers that would be successful?—No expert can place a barrier in any of the rivers that will hold. Let me go further. This year we have carried out the erection of barriers to the letter of Mr. Ayson's recommendation. The posts were driven in of the right size and every detail carried out. They were erected three miles up the river, and they lasted and held and did their work till the day before yesterday, when we had enormous floods in all the rivers, and you might just as well have put flour in the rivers as the barriers; they have all gone. When Mr. Iles says that the rivers were sufficiently blocked to hold the fish from coming down, I would like to ask this: if the barriers would hold the fish from coming down, why did they not stop them from going up? I will just touch on the petition. It is signed by casual men in Rotorua. It is not a representative petition. In one or two cases I have found the same name written twice.

8. *The Chairman.*] I do not think we need go into that. We shall be guided more by the evidence than the names on the petition?—Very well. Regarding the parasite and the deterioration of the fish, the Department could not be held responsible for the way in which the fish were deteriorating. As soon as it was known and decided what was the cause the Department started to deal with it in an energetic manner. It was not until the disease was found out that anything could be done. Mr. Kerrigan has been sent up there, and he has practically located the parasite and named it, and now we are in a position to deal with it. The Government are determined now to deal with it in a businesslike way and try if possible to improve the fishing. With regard to the question of local control, I may say that during the time I have been in Rotorua I have never received information that would lead to a conviction from any honorary Ranger or man interested in the protection of game. The chairman, on my arrival in Rotorua, gave me the names of men who he thought should be watched, but since then I have never received any information. I have been ostracized—I would not like to go further—by the members of the Rod and Gun Club, but I have done my duty. As I say, the members of that club could not deal with this matter of the protection of game with such a large district, and it being a tourist district, where every tourist means something in the way of business; and every man connected with the Rod and Gun Club has business dealings with the tourists.

9. *Mr. Isitt.*] What about netting at the mouth of the rivers?—After finding out for certain what the fish were suffering from, it was decided to reduce the number of the fish and take out the "slabs." The only way of dealing with them was by netting, irrespective of whether the fish were in condition or not, for there is not a fish in Lake Rotorua that is not affected. It does not matter how good the condition is, the fish is badly affected. The parasite bores into the intestines, and from there under the skin. Therefore it was decided to reduce the number of fish. The first year the netting was carried on at the mouths of the rivers all over the lake, and the fish were destroyed. The second year the same process was being carried out when it was asked that instead of the fish being destroyed they should be put on the market, and it was decided to put the good fish on the market for sale.

10. Are they good for food with the parasite?—Yes, as long as it is not in the flesh. The netting was started, and a depot was opened, and fish were being brought in. We were dealing with the fish on purpose to reduce the numbers and to improve the fishing. Then the members of the Rod and Gun Club telegraphed to the Premier, and the depot was closed. If the Rod and Gun Club are earnest in their endeavour to improve the fishing, and they say they can do so by taking it over, must not the business portion be put on one side? The fisheries are in that state they have to be dealt with, and if they are dealt with in a strenuous manner it means that it is going to affect people's business, and so long as the Government do it in a strenuous manner they will be opposed by the local people. Therefore, if the fishing were handed over to the local men to deal with, how could they possibly improve it? The next year the same thing happened again. The netting had no sooner started than representations were made to the Government, and I received a telegram to stop netting. In the meantime a depot had been erected at Tokaanu. On the closing of the smoke-house we proceeded to Tokaanu. It was an expensive undertaking removing the men and material. We arrived on the Tokaanu wharf. I had no sooner arrived there than I was informed that Mr. Ryan was using his influence to stop netting or dealing with the fish in any manner whatever. We had arrived there at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. At 4 o'clock I received a telegram from the chief of my Department, "Return to Rotorua. Stop netting." Now, why was the opposition raised? If we were going there to take the fish for the purpose of improving the fishing, why should there be interference by men who had a personal interest? That was the position. Regarding the fish sent over to the smoke-house by Mr. Ryan, there certainly was a fine lot that had been caught at the camps. These were some eighteen miles away from Tokaanu, and sometimes there was a very rough sea which no rowing-boat could live in. The fish were brought to the wharf, and on the expert looking at them he said, "They are of no use to me. They have been too long in the sun on the sand; they will not smoke." After turning them over he took out a certain number that were suitable for smoking. With regard to clearing the Tongariro River: The fishing in Lake Taupo is con-



trolled by two people only—Mr. Ryan and Mr. Jones, of Tokaanu. Representation was made by Mr. Jones to clear the banks of the river, and on the papers being submitted to me by my General Manager I said, "No. We have no control whatever of the fishing on these rivers; if the banks want clearing surely those who have camps and are receiving payment from them should clear the banks themselves, and not ask the Department to do it," because there are only a certain number of camps, and when these are engaged nobody else can go and fish there. Regarding the launch on Lake Taupo—

*Mr. Isitt:* I do not think you need answer that.

11. *Mr. Dickson.*] I should like to know what was done before the barriers were put across the river?—The posts were driven in from 13 ft. to 14 ft. across the mouth of the river. Two lengths of 4 ft. wire netting were strapped together, secured to the posts, and stretched right across the mouth of the river. Inside the barrier up-stream were placed large bolsters of manuka half the size of this table, and as the pumice washed away they were replenished time after time. But when there came a large flood the river banked up; the silt banked up against the whole of the barriers, and the result was that it scoured underneath 15 ft. and 20 ft. deep, and when the members of the Rod and Gun Club made an examination they found matters as described by Mr. Iles.

12. *Mr. Payne.*] Would I be right in assuming that owing to the fact that you had to take proceedings against those who were poaching when you went up there, there would be some antagonism to yourself on that account?—Yes. I prosecuted the president of the Rod and Gun Club.

13. Further than that, may I assume that the Department has done all in its power to overcome this disease in the fish, and that the netting has been part of the policy to thin out the bad fish in order that sound fish might take their place?—That is so.

14. *Mr. Peacock.*] It was suggested that netting fish and burying them was a great waste. Would it not have been detrimental to the health of the community if these diseased fish had been put on the market?—Certainly; but those fish that were not affected should, I consider, have been put on the market.

THURSDAY, 31ST JULY, 1913.

FREDERICK MOORHOUSE further examined. (No. 8.)

1. *The Chairman.*] I understand you have something further to say?—I was asked the question, if I remember rightly, at the last meeting, What is the cause of the trouble? and I said it was because I prosecuted the president of the Rod and Gun Club. I think that is what I said, but I had no time to make an explanation over the matter. Had I had more time I think I should not have led you astray over the matter—I hope I have not. The position is this: In May, 1910, I prosecuted a certain member who was very much interested in the control of the fishing, and who in November—a few months afterwards—was an executive officer of the Rod and Gun Club. I prosecuted him in 1910 and he was fined £1. In 1911—the following season—he was made president of the club. That is what I meant to say. When I said I prosecuted the president I had not time to make the explanation that I did not prosecute him while he was president. But he was president after I prosecuted him. I hope I have made that quite plain. I have no feeling in the matter. I am just telling you what took place. Now, regarding Mr. Ryan's or Mr. Iles's statement that the barriers will not hold, any one who is acquainted with fishing or the taking of ova knows that it is very easy to erect barriers to hold fish for the purpose of stripping for a short time, but it is a matter of impossibility to erect barriers that will stand in a river against all floods, or trees, or anything coming down. Nothing will stand. I can erect barriers and have temporary barriers in the different rivers now and they will hold so long as we have no flood. We are stripping at the present time by means of temporary barriers. Regarding Mr. Ryan's statement that he stopped the netting, that is quite true: he did. The netting was stopped in Rotorua. We started netting there on purpose to reduce the numbers and to put any decent fish on the market for food. Representations were made by the members of the Rod and Gun Club that it was ruining the fishing, and a telegram was received from Wellington stopping the netting. It was then decided to erect a smoke-house and go to Tokaanu. A smoke-house was erected. Special men were engaged to do the netting, and we went down. Mr. Ryan handled the stuff on the wharf. He never objected to our going there, or I certainly should not have put the men to all the expense of going over there with nets and tackle. We arrived over there, and I was told that Mr. Ryan had been wiring to members of Parliament to have the netting stopped, for if the netting were to go on it would ruin all the fishing. We arrived there at 2 o'clock, and at 4 o'clock I received a telegram to pack up and go back to Rotorua. That sort of thing has been going on between Rotorua and Taupo for the last three years—first starting the netting, then stopping, then going on again, and then stopping. I do not think I have anything else to say.

2. *Mr. Isitt.*] When that gentleman was fined was it simply because he did not have his license with him?—No.

3. Or was it because the evidence was such that the Magistrate doubted whether he had a license?—There are special circumstances connected with the case. If you will excuse me I will read the report to my General Manager, under date 10th May, 1910: "Yesterday afternoon I saw the launch 'Kia Ora,' owned by Mr. August Brackebush, of Rotorua, out on the lake and being used for fishing purposes. The launch contained four persons—three men and a boy. Two men were fishing with rods, while Mr. Brackebush was driving the launch. On our approaching the launch the rods were taken in by the two men and Mr. Brackebush appeared and com-

menced fishing. I went on board his launch and asked for his license. He said, 'I have not got it with me.' I then turned to the other man and asked his name, and also if he had a license. He replied, 'I am not fishing.' I told him I had seen him fishing. He replied, 'I have taken out two or three day licenses, but I have not got one now.' He gave his name as John Robertson, 107 Colombo Street, Christchurch; present address, care A. Brackebush, Rotorua. Regarding the other person who was using the rod I cannot say positively, as all were standing together at the stern of the boat, but I saw Mr. Robertson, as he was the person nearest to me. Will you kindly advise me if I shall lay an information at once.' The launch passed me with these gentlemen fishing behind. They did not know me. I had only been a very short time in the district. I did not know Mr. Brackebush; I did not even know his name. As soon as ever they saw me approaching, Mr. Brackebush, who was not fishing but driving the launch, came down out of the cockpit and took the rod out of this man's hands and was fishing, while another man went up into the cockpit and drove the engine. I went on board and asked him for his license. He said, 'I am not fishing.' I said, 'I know that, but you have been fishing. Have you a license?' I turned to Mr. Brackebush, and he said, 'Where is your authority?' I showed it to him. He said, 'I have no license; it is at home.' I said, 'You are supposed to carry a license with you. You are about the fiftieth or sixtieth person I have stuck up that has not had a license, and I have reported the matter to Wellington, and I am instructed to prosecute the first one. Now, has your friend a license or has he not?' He said, 'I do not think he has got one.' I said, 'Very well, I will prosecute you for doing what you have done—deliberately trying to deceive me by taking the rod out of his hand and fishing.' I prosecuted him. He had a lawyer. The case was called. I had to appear on behalf of the Department. The lawyer got up and pleaded guilty to both charges. One was fined £3 and costs—that was Mr. Robertson—and the other £1, with costs 7s. From that day until this the Department has been harassed by members of the Rod and Gun Club, so much so that they prosecuted me for taking fish in the execution of my duty and put me to the expense of attending the Court two days to defend the action of the Government in netting the lakes. I should like to read a letter, if you will allow me, to show what was going on when I arrived there. This is a part of my report to my General Manager: "Preservation of fish and game: This subject has received vigorous attention, and every effort has been extended to check poaching, but it must be confessed that it is one of the most difficult problems the Department has to contend with—firstly, on account of the number of boardinghouses in Rotorua whose proprietors are willing to purchase anything in the way of game or fish either in or out of season; secondly, there are certain shopkeepers whose business is very materially affected by a strict enforcement of the fisheries regulations regarding the illegal selling of trout. For years past many residents of Rotorua have made a regular income from the illegal sale of trout, which, of course, necessitated purchases of fishing-tackle to carry on their business. Now that very few, if any, are fishing for sale it means a certain loss to those holders of stocks in the fishing line; thirdly, on strictly enforcing that every person fishing must have a license, this has had its effect on the business of the launch-owners, as in the past some launch-owners have not troubled as to whether the person engaging the launch has a license or not, and quoted a price for hire of launch, rods, tackle, &c., for a day's fishing; but when it was pointed out to them (the launch-owners) that they were likely to get into trouble for having unlicensed persons fishing on their launches, it is thought that the extra charge for a license, together with hire of launch, has made the total expense for a day's fishing rather high for the ordinary man. It can be gathered from the above that many influences are at work to counteract the good work that is being done in the way of checking poaching, and any one who fearlessly carries out these arduous duties will be subjected to all kinds of insults and persecution." And I have been subject to it since I have been there.

4. *Mr. Dickson.*] Have you got the reply to that letter?—Yes: "Your memo. dated 21st ultimo having been referred to the Hon. the Minister I shall be glad if you will inform Mr. Moorhouse that the Minister has endorsed the papers 'Satisfactory.'"

5. Do you admit that the Auckland society blocked these rivers successfully, as was stated in that letter that was read by the clerk before you gave evidence this morning?—There is a difference between blocking the rivers altogether and blocking them to take the fish for spawning purposes.

6. You say that letter is not correct, do you?—It is correct as far as it goes, but it is misleading. I say it is impossible to erect barriers to stop the fish from going up during the spawning season—that is, to make a permanent barrier to stand from June, when the fish start to run up the rivers, until November or the end of August; but it is not impossible to erect barriers that will stand a fortnight or eight or nine days. We are doing that every day in order to take the fish.

7. You were not in Rotorua when that was done?—Yes. It has been done by Mr. Ayson.

8. I mean, when the Auckland society did it?—Yes. The Auckland society are allowed to take 300,000 ova free every year from the different lakes, and it is by means of the barriers that they take the ova. I hope you will not misunderstand me. The permanent barriers were supposed to be erected to block the fish from going up the river altogether; they were supposed to be an absolute permanency that was to stand all flood and all weathers. It was found impossible to erect barriers that would stand permanently. But it is not impossible to erect a smaller barrier across the river in order to take fish for spawning purposes, because you can erect it to-day and you will find eight or ten fish in the barrier to-morrow, and then perhaps it will be washed away.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 24th July, 1913.

Owing to 1 o'clock having been reached to-day when Mr. Moorhouse had given his evidence I was not allowed to ask the witness any questions. One referred to the remark he made that the president and members of the Rod and Gun Club in Rotorua had been convicted of poaching. This is an absolute misstatement and calculated to do harm to the petition. One member of the club was convicted of a breach of the regulations. This breach consisted in not having his fishing-licenses on his person when fishing. It came out in evidence that the gentleman had a £1 license, but had left it at home in another coat. It was certainly a breach of the regulations in not having it on him while fishing, but to brand the president and members of the club as guilty of poaching on a case of this sort does not appear to me quite fair.

I am, &amp;c.,

ARTHUR J. ILES.

Mr. J. H. Bradney.

*Petition of A. J. Iles and Others.*

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 24th July, 1913.

Owing to time-limit being reached when Mr. Moorhouse gave his evidence this morning I was unable to ask any questions of him. There were several important ones, and one I should have asked was why the Auckland society successfully erected barriers at the several rivers for successive seasons and trapped fish most successfully before him for stripping purposes and he failed to do so, as he stated, owing to nature of bottom of rivers, &c.

He also stated I used power to stop him netting, which is quite right, but I did not use any power to stop him netting anywhere in the lake except the river-mouths, where English and overseas anglers were camped, and who told me that if any netting was allowed within the legal limit reserved for fly fishers they would pack up and leave the country, hence my reason for preventing illegal netting at the mouths of rivers.

I remain, &amp;c.,

T. RYAN

The Chairman, A to L Committee.

DEAR SIR,—

Rotorua, 18th August, 1913.

I am returning copy of my evidence, and I thank you for the privilege of seeing it. As the statement *re* barriers on pages 4 and 5 seems to be a bit mixed I have reworded the statement, which I hope will be satisfactory. On pages 4 and 8 reference is made to prosecution of the president: I do not remember stating at that period on page 4 that I prosecuted the president. The question on page 8, last paragraph, was asked me by Mr. Dickson, as you will remember, just before the Chairman closed the evidence at 1.5 p.m. I have taken the liberty of altering the question and answer, as I think it was; no other questions were asked me after that, although page 9 shows otherwise. You will remember that Mr. Iles and Mr. Ryan wished to ask some other questions, but the Chairman declared the business closed. If I had mentioned that I had prosecuted the president before the closing I should have made the statement then that I came a week later to do. However, I have signed the papers, and hope they will be satisfactory.

Yours faithfully,

F. MOORHOUSE.

The Clerk, A to L Petitions Committee.

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