

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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