

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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