

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