

15. Are the goats numerous in this district?—No, excepting in certain localities. They are wild goats: that is the trouble. In the forests where the goats are at all thick there is practically no undergrowth—the whole is eaten out—and the forest does not improve.

16. You think the goats had better be killed?—Yes.

17. What is your opinion, Mr. Skinner?—They are thick in places. In one portion of the district beyond where we were yesterday a Mr. Boyd has already killed five hundred goats. He said he could get no feed for his stock.

18. You recommend shooting them, Mr. Hursthouse?—I think the damage done by deer, goats, and cattle could be stopped by the rifle at any time.

19. It seems to be a question whether it would not pay the State, in view of the few sportsmen who are in the district or who come here from abroad, to keep our climatic reserves intact, rather than allow the deer to spread and damage them irretrievably?—Of course, I am not of the opinion that the deer are hurting our climatic reserves.

20. If they make tracks through the bush and eat the underscrub it will have a drying effect on the bush, rendering it more likely to be destroyed by fire?—Yes.

21. Do you not consider it would be a good plan to have certain parts of the country set apart as deer-parks or sanctuaries, and outside those places let the deer be shot at any time?—That seems a good plan. I have had cases mentioned to me of deer coming into crops and making a racecourse of them—not eating the crops. That was in the North Bank Settlement. They put in the night galloping round; not much of the crop left in the morning.

22. Have you had any instances under your notice of deer goring the draught horses?—Yes, in the Westport district and at Reefton—one case at each place.

23. Have you heard of any such cases, Mr. Skinner?—We had a complaint from Mr. Anderson, who had a fine draught horse killed in this district.

24. *Mr. Adams.*] What timbers in marking trees would you consider milling timbers, Mr. Hursthouse?—Rimu, matai, white-pine, totara. I have occasionally marked a miro where exceptionally good. Unless a tree contained 250 ft. I would not mark miro. The reason I would mark it is because probably he would take it whether I marked it or not.

WILLIAM NORRIS MASEFIELD sworn and examined. (No. 38.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Where do you live?—I am a sheep-farmer, living in Pelorus Sound. I have lived in the district about twenty years.

2. Are the deer fairly numerous where you live?—Not on my place, but quite near there are a number of red deer. They live chiefly in the bush, where they live on the leaves of the small trees. They also come out on the edge of the faces and feed on the grass.

3. Are they increasing?—Not very much. I have been deer-stalking for eight years, and have not noticed there are many more than there used to be. I have had more experience in the Wairau deer-stalking than down there.

4. Have you heard any complaints from the settlers of the deer damaging or destroying their fruit-trees and crops, or frightening or goring their horses?—I have heard once or twice—not locally, but more from the North Island—that they had to be shot off a bit, being too many; but they are not thick enough to have to do that here. I heard a farmer say a stag came among his cattle, but the big steers got hold of him and drove him away.

5. Will they not damage the climatic reserves and render them liable to fire?—I noticed at the “World’s End,” at Tennyson Inlet, on the Nelson boundary, they had got at the young trees, but in the Wairau there is just the birch, and they do no harm to the bush. They attack the small trees that do not grow large. They do not touch the pines, tawa, or pukatea.

6. Not even in their young state?—I have not noticed that. They eat one shiny-leaved tree that has a soft bark, but I do not know the name.

7. We have had evidence that the deer are doing much damage to orchards, one witness in Nelson complaining that five hundred trees had been so destroyed?—In my district the settlers would soon settle them if they got into an orchard; but they are not thick enough there.

8. Do you not think if certain areas of bush country were set aside as deer-parks—where they could be shot at certain seasons—and outside those areas they could be shot at any time, the sportsman’s case would be met?—Yes. I suppose that would thin them out in the parts where you do not want them.

9. The president of the acclimatization society in Dunedin gave evidence and seemed prepared to fall in with that view. If treated in that way the interests of sportsmen and tourists might be conserved, and stop this damage being done to private individuals’ properties?—They have destroyed a lot of crops, but not near us. They are not thick enough there and cannot get to us, as our property is on a narrow peninsula, and the water stops them.

10. *Mr. Adams.*] Do you know of many sportsmen coming from outside New Zealand to the district you know of best?—I do not think there are many. Some come to the Wairau deer-stalking, but I think most go to Otago and Wairarapa.

11. How many do you think have been here?—I only know of a few of my own friends.

12. Then the amount brought into the country by way of the licenses is of no great value?—I understand that you assess the damage done by the deer at a greater value than the income that may be brought into the country by encouraging sportsmen to come here. In my opinion, however, they do not do any great damage.