

White Rocks Station, adjoining the Haurangi Reserve, in Wairarapa. Of course, I am aware that deer do bark certain trees, and are very fond of a shrub called "whitewood"—the mahoe. Last April I found on a portion of this property, where we used to get many heads, no deer at all, but the whitewood was coming up again where it had been destroyed. I do not know of my own knowledge that they are doing any damage to the timber-trees. They will eat the shrubs, of course. The deer got very numerous in the district I mentioned, and the owner of the station got permission from the Government to kill them off, and we could see that the deer had gone from the way the mahoe was growing again.

3. Do you think it would be practicable to set apart certain areas of forest country as deer-sanctuaries, confining them to such areas, and shooting all found outside?—I think it would be practicable, but whether you are going to do any good by it is another question. If there are goats and pigs in the forest, why clear only the deer out? You must get rid of all animals. There is no doubt that in the past deer herds ought to have been kept in check. In the Haurangi Reserve there are too many deer, and the acclimatization society last year hired men to go up and shoot a certain number. The settlers have also shot a number; but what we ought to be able to do is: wherever there is a herd getting beyond a certain size, to shoot out any stags with bad heads, or old hinds that are the cause of the deterioration in the herds. If the societies had had the experience fifteen years ago they have now the herds could have been kept in check that way, and if that were done I should not think the deer would do much harm. They will damage orchards and turnip-patches, and in a district like Nelson the question would arise of whether for a certain year the restrictions regarding shooting them should not be taken off altogether.

4. In the vicinity of the Government plantations at Tapanui, and also at Hanmer, the deer are coming down and eating the young trees. What do you think should be done in such a case?—They are fairly easy to scare with a few shots and dogs; but, still, I cannot say that deer do no harm, because they will eat something. On the other hand, they are a considerable advertisement to New Zealand, and there is a large sum of money spent annually here by the many Englishmen and others who come here for the stalking, in addition to the money spent by ourselves.

5. Can you give the Commission any idea of the number of licenses taken out in your district by people who reside outside New Zealand but come here for the sport?—No. I am sorry to say there are not so many this year as in the past, because there is no doubt that in the Haurangi Reserve the herds are deteriorating, because there are too many deer there. When we get the good heads again we will get the stalkers. You can get better heads in Otago than here.

6. Have you anything you wish to add?—I am very interested in the preservation of the native birds. It may not come within the scope of your Commission, but I hope you will recommend that the bush in Canterbury and Otago, as far as possible, should be preserved—not necessarily the timber bush. I know those provinces well, because my home was in Canterbury, and there are numbers of the mokomoko or bell-bird there. Near where my people live there is a reserve, and there are other areas that could be secured for the purpose. It would be a simple matter to obtain them, as there is provision in the Act for the Government to exchange Crown lands for bush for scenic purposes. Also, it is not a question of the country having to find money for the purpose of the reserves in question, because in the districts of Canterbury and Otago the pastoral runs are Crown lands. The Act has been taken advantage of I know, but then it can be taken advantage of in every case where there is a bush concerned. The point is that the taxation is increasing, and if a man has 400 acres of bush country preserved, and his taxation is going up on the land going up in value, he begins to think he must get something out of it.

7. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Do you think there should be no taxation on the land where a piece of bush is preserved by a private owner?—There should be no rates or taxes on such a piece of bush.

8. You are aware that every scenic reserve is now a bird-sanctuary?—Yes.

9. Would that fulfil your purpose?—Well, in order to preserve our reserves they want, of course, much more looking after, and that brings in the matter of expense. My suggestion is that every Rabbit Inspector, every acclimatization society ranger, and every policeman should be instructed to keep an eye on any reserve in his district. What happens now is this: in a certain district there is a reserve, and a man who has got land alongside it will invariably get a burn into it either wilfully or by accident. Then the settler's stock very often finds its way on to that reserve. If the Rabbit Inspector and the local policeman knew that they had an interest in preserving these reserves and birds I think some good would accrue to the Dominion generally. In that way I think we could save the birds.

10. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] We want notices posted up at all the railway-stations as to the reserves, and asking the public to assist in keeping them intact?—Yes. In America the public are educated up to taking great interest in their reserves.

11. *Mr. Clarke.*] You were asked the question as to whether in your opinion reserved areas should be exempt from taxation?—Yes.

12. Supposing such an exemption were enacted, might it not happen that after a man had held for some years a reserved area which had been exempted from rates and taxes he might determine that by clearing the land he could get a greater profit out of it—and by selling the timber off it—than by holding it as a reserve?—That might arise.

13. What guarantee would you impose to prevent such a contingency arising?—I would like to think the matter out. I think you could come to some equitable agreement with the owner that he should not sell the land for a certain number of years.

14. What would the agreement be worth when the timber was down?—There would have to be a bond that he should not cut the timber or sell it for a number of years.