

12. *Mr. Adams.*] What do you think of the suggestion to exempt the private owner from rates and taxes as an inducement to him to plant?—I quite agree with that.

13. Would you not prefer that proposal to the idea of compelling him to plant?—Where expert knowledge is brought to bear it should predominate, and if necessary pressure should be exerted to effect these improvements. My evidence, however, bears only on the value of shelter for dairy stock.

GORMAN WILLIAM MCINTOSH and ALEXANDER COWIE sworn and examined. (No. 7.)

1. *The Chairman.*] I understand that you gentlemen represent the Otago Acclimatization Society?—[*Mr. McIntosh*] Yes, I am the president, and Mr. Cowie the secretary.

2. It has been represented to us, Mr. McIntosh, that the unrestricted roaming of the deer through the national forests may prove detrimental to the trees, and we would like to gather the opinion of the society as to the value of the deer to the country, &c. Do you consider the untrammelled wandering of the deer all over the country beneficial to the State?—No. There are parts where they do no damage and give very good sport, and thereby attract visitors to the country. Money is spent with benefit to the district concerned, but to allow the deer to roam without restriction throughout the country would be very detrimental.

3. Do you consider that certain well-defined areas for deer-parks would meet the requirements of sportsmen?—Yes.

4. In what manner would you restrict the deer to those areas?—The only way is to shoot them off and keep the numbers down.

5. It is stated that some herds are spreading throughout the Alps, and unless some steps are taken they might soon occupy the whole of that territory. They are also invading settlements and the State nursery at Tapanui?—The latter are isolated instances. In New Zealand there is a tremendous lot of country that is fit for nothing else but deer. Where the animals now are is very rough, broken country, with no sheep on it in many cases. The red deer are high up on the snow-line, and that country is fit for nothing else. The fallow deer are at Tapanui, in the Blue Mountains, and in that district we are told they are a nuisance to settlers. The matter was referred to our society, and we are in communication with the Minister of Internal Affairs, and we have agreed that those settlers whose lands are affected should have the right, with their families, to kill the deer all the year round in order to keep them down. But some of those settlers have got at a very nominal rate country which would be better utilized as deer-parks. At other places on the mountains deer have invaded the settlements, but the settlers do not mind, as they can get game nearly all the time, and they take advantage of it. Something should be done to keep the deer out of the Government nursery, as they damage the young plants.

6. *Mr. Murdoch.*] The red deer are doing the damage at Dusky Hill plantation. I understand you are referring to fallow deer?—The fallow deer are reported to be more mischievous. We have suggested that settlers should use the bird-scarifiers which have proved so successful in other places to keep the animals out. The cartridges can be set to explode at any interval required. They have been very effective at Roxburgh amongst the fruit-trees. The settlers in the deer districts do not think much of them, but we propose to send the Rangers up with two of the machines to let the settlers see the effect.

7. *The Chairman.*] It is stated that the deer eat the young growth out, and perhaps in course of time may exterminate the climatic reserves. Have you any opinion to offer in that connection?—I suppose the cattle that run there would do the same. I have been told that the deer on the Blue Mountains have done good in keeping down the Canadian thistle.

8. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] If you give the settler the right to shoot at any time he will welcome the deer, and our forests might be ruined?—I have not heard that they were doing damage in the Tapanui Nursery, but we have been informed that they were working down towards there. They will have to be shot out of that.

9. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Deer have quite recently been placed in the vast forest at the headwaters of the Waimakariri River in the hope that in time they will help to form one continuous herd throughout the northern portion of the Southern Alps. Do you think it reasonable that any risk of damage should be run in the case of that forest, which is of very great importance to the Dominion, for the sake of sport?—I do not think those deer would really be a serious menace to our national forests, and it would take them a long time to spread through that range. In the Hawea district there is a very large herd that wants shooting out. They never leave that part of the country, with the result that the district has become overstocked, and the animals have deteriorated. We have arranged to shoot them out by contract. We have shot out five hundred head of deer this season.

10. Tourists go to Mount Cook to see the beautiful mountain-flowers, and if there were large herds of chamois there those plants would be wiped out. Which do you think it is the best for the country to keep?—It is a matter of taste. The botanist would prefer the ranunculus, and the sportsman the chamois. There is very little danger of the chamois becoming so numerous as to do much harm. A short time ago only one was seen on Mount Cook, and that was supposed to be the last. No others have been seen.

*Mr. Cowie:* At the head of Lake Wanaka there are large patches of the *Ranunculus Lyallii*.

11. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Is there not a danger of these plants being destroyed, Mr. Cowie, by these animals in those places where the Government caters for tourists, and where consequently they should be preserved?—The mountains where there are large patches are often the places where the deer are most plentiful: they do not touch them. It is above sheep level.