

8. Do you think it right that forests of that timber should be burnt?—Decidedly not.

9. Would a proper examination of our birch forests be useful to the country?—I think it would be very useful. There is probably a prejudice more than anything else against the black-birch.

10. *Mr. Murdoch.*] Does not all the birch timber shrink or warp?—To some extent. If you put sufficient lead into the paint the weatherboards will stand well. Twenty years ago I built a cottage for Mr. C. J. Harper, and it is still in a good state of preservation.

11. You could not stock it?—Not for weatherboards, but for scantlings.

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MORTON ANDERSON, M.D., sworn and examined. (No. 20.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are vice-president of the Acclimatization Society of North Canterbury?—Yes.

2. It has been represented to the Commission that the unrestricted roaming of the deer through the national parks may prove detrimental to the trees. Does your society think they should be restricted to certain areas in order to prevent such damage?—They cannot do any harm up the Rakaia Gorge. They form a great attraction to tourists, who belong to a money-spending class.

3. Do you know what amount is spent in deer-stalking licenses?—Our herd has not brought in a great deal yet, as it was only started in 1897, and I estimate their numbers at about 550. They are spread over many thousands of acres far back from any agricultural country.

4. It has been represented that they are eating out in some places the flora in the native forests, exposing the bush to danger from fire. Has that phase of the question occurred to you?—They are not doing any harm to the bush in the Rakaia. I was up there once deer-stalking, and noticed they were rubbing their antlers on the trees and on the wild-irishmen growing in the river-bed. The latter were dying on account of being practically ring-barked. Some of the forest trees were marked with something like a blaze in one part, but it did not go round the tree. I do not think it would have any serious effect.

5. *Dr. Cockayne.*] It is essential that at the headwaters of the Waimakariri the forest should be preserved, in order to protect the plains from floods. I heard that deer had been turned into this national park in order to allow them to mingle with the Rakaia herd and other herds, so as to have one vast herd of deer right through the north of the Island and along the eastern slopes of the Southern Alps. Do you think it right there should be any risk of that forest being destroyed by these animals?—It would not be right, but I do not see how they are going to introduce the element of danger. Deer-stalkers do not start bush-fires.

6. I am referring to the danger to the forests from the deer themselves?—They certainly make tracks in the forest, but they do not clear out the undergrowth.

7. Do you think the deer should be confined to specific areas, to be known as deer-parks, for sporting purposes, and declared vermin outside those parks?—They would roam into the forest all the same.

8. I take exception to the deer that have been turned out in the River Poulter district. May there not be danger to that forest in time when those deer multiply?—I have not sufficient experience of the subject to say definitely one way or another, but as far as my own observation went at the Mathias and the Rakaia I could not see that they were doing any damage to the bush.

9. *The Chairman.*] Perhaps your society will discuss the matter and forward their observations to the Commission?—We might do that. No complaints have reached me as yet.

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CHARLES CHILTON, M.D., D.Sc., sworn and examined. (No. 21.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are a professor at Canterbury College, and have travelled considerably in New Zealand, and must have noticed the universal destruction of forest. Do you consider that in all cases this is justifiable?—I have noticed that our forests are disappearing, and as one interested in botany I have been horrified at the rapidity with which the bush is going. This has been particularly noticeable up the Main Trunk line between Wellington and Auckland within the last four years. At Lake Wakatipu a lot of the bush along the head of the lake has disappeared within recent years.

2. In what cases do you consider that removal of forest is contrary to the interests of the Dominion?—That is very difficult to answer. In certain cases the forest must go—where land is valuable—but other cases should be seriously considered before the bush is cut down. I should be inclined to be conservative in regard to keeping the forest intact unless some definite gain is to be obtained by its removal. We have to bear in mind the increased cost of modern forestry operations.

3. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Are there any particular spots you would like preserved?—All places which are essential to climatic conditions, and forests on the mountains and at the headwaters of the rivers, in order to conserve the water-supply. A proper survey would have to be made of the right kinds of areas that should be preserved, and then I presume an Act of Parliament would be required to finally deal with them and reserve them.

4. *Mr. Adams.*] In your opinion does the forest affect the rainfall?—It is a much-disputed question, and the general conclusion is that the actual rainfall cannot be increased by the forests,