

chairman stated in his report: "In my last report you will doubtless remember that I informed you that the Government had given its assurance that the whole of the Rotorua district fisheries, &c., would be placed under the control of the Tourist Department and a separate district proclaimed. In spite of the storm of opposition raised by the Auckland society against this being done the separation has been brought about, and subsequent events have amply proved that the move was a wise and just one in the interests of our district. It will be gratifying to you all to learn that since assuming this control the club is now practically an advisory board to the Department, the services of the council being cordially accepted by the Government. This has resulted in your council being consulted," and so on.

2. *The Chairman.*] What is the date of that?—This was the 1908 report of the club.

3. How long was it written after the Tourist Department had taken over control?—We took it over in February, 1907, and in 1908 this was their report.

4. They had not felt the effect of it by that time?—But Mr. Iles said, I understood, that it was taken over on the understanding that it was to be handed over to the Rod and Gun Club.

*Mr. Iles:* No.

*Witness:* Then I have misunderstood him. Now, gentlemen, with regard to the "incapacity." It is always a very difficult position to place a man in when he is asked to prove his capability, but I must do the best I can for myself. I have been connected intimately with acclimatization work for twenty-four years. During that time I have handled deer, fish, birds, and big game. During the early part of my career with the acclimatization society I was yearly for ten years connected with fish. Through practically the whole of the North Island I was dealing with trout. I was sent by the Government to make an importation of big game from America, and I made the most successful importation of big game that was ever brought from America. The second time I was sent off to bring back a consignment of moose, and I landed them in this country without the loss of one. A year or two back the Government had engaged the Commissioner of Fisheries and Game in California to bring through a shipment of moose, and he lost all but two, yet I landed mine in New Zealand without loss. I have handled large shipments of quail brought by the acclimatization society. I also handled large shipments of opossums that were liberated all over New Zealand. Further than that, the Government imported from America a number of McKinnor trout. These were sent to Christchurch to be hatched out for liberation in Lake Kanieri. The time passed when they should have been liberated, and Mr. Seddon was pressed by the Hokitika society to have these fish turned out. Mr. Ayson was asked to report on the possibility of getting these fish to Lake Kanieri. He reported that it was impossible to move them on account of their size. The curator of the Christchurch ponds, who had reared these fish, said it was impossible to move them. The secretary of the society, Mr. Righton, represented to the Government that it would be better to leave these fish in Christchurch and let them breed there again and hand over the ova to the Hokitika society. Mr. Seddon gave orders the fish had to go, and Mr. Donne said to me, "Go to Christchurch and take those fish to Hokitika." I went down to Christchurch and saw the fish. I was told then by the secretary and the curator that it was impossible to take them. Well, I landed every fish except two at Lake Kanieri, against the opposition and the pressure that was brought to bear to prevent the fish from being moved. After being with the Government for some time I was transferred to Rotorua as a result of the representations of the Rod and Gun Club regarding the enormous amount of poaching that was going on. I was sent specially from my position of Inspector for the Tourist Department to report on their representations. I arrived in Rotorua, and found that everybody was poaching—everybody.

5. *Mr. Isitt.*] The members of the fishing club?—The members of the Rod and Gun Club. Everybody was poaching. Fish were being eaten in the boardinghouses out of season. People were dealing illegally with fish in every direction. I prosecuted them. Now I ask you to take note of the revenue. In 1907-8, the first year of acclimatization work by the Department, the revenue receipts were £503, and the total expenditure was £552. In 1908-9 the receipts were £669 and the expenditure £699. I came on in 1910. In 1909-10 the receipts were £671. I had only been a few months in charge then. Then a jump took place under my control. For 1910-11 the receipts rose to £962. For 1911-12 they were £1,053. The rise was made up from the increase of licenses in the district. For 1911-12 the receipts were made up as follows: Fishing licenses, £631 11s. 2d.; sale of trout ova and fry, £114 9s.; sale of smoked fish, £92 14s.; fines, £1 9s.; game licenses, £196 1s. 6d.; fines, £17 7s. This only goes up to March, 1912. I may say there have been a great many fines since.

6. We should like to hear from you about the wire netting?—About the barriers. In 1908 a report was handed in by Mr. Ayson as to what should be done for the improvement of the fish. The fish were suffering from a parasite. [Specimens produced in bottles.] One of these is the worm, and the other shows the way the fish are affected. It bores in the stomach of the fish. In 1909, after his report had been submitted to the Government, the Tourist Department decided to erect barriers at the mouth of the rivers in accordance with his suggestions, but on account of the peculiar formation of the bottom of the rivers, which are composed of very light pumice, Mr. Birks, who is one of the leading engineers in connection with the waterworks, decided to erect wire netting instead of posts. To carry out Mr. Ayson's idea was an impossibility. He had not gone into the matter in a thorough, businesslike way; for any obstruction whatever—it does not matter whether it is wire netting or post—erected in the pumice bottoms will cause a scour out, and scour so badly that it is impossible for anything to hold. The wire-netting barriers held successfully for a time—absolutely successfully—never mind what statement you have heard. I will tell you why they were not a success. The land round Rotorua is Native land. Objection was raised by the Maoris to having these barriers placed there, thus stopping them from going up and down in their canoes. A swing-gate had to be placed on the first big river that runs