

menced fishing. I went on board his launch and asked for his license. He said, 'I have not got it with me.' I then turned to the other man and asked his name, and also if he had a license. He replied, 'I am not fishing.' I told him I had seen him fishing. He replied, 'I have taken out two or three day licenses, but I have not got one now.' He gave his name as John Robertson, 107 Colombo Street, Christchurch; present address, care A. Brackebush, Rotorua. Regarding the other person who was using the rod I cannot say positively, as all were standing together at the stern of the boat, but I saw Mr. Robertson, as he was the person nearest to me. Will you kindly advise me if I shall lay an information at once." The launch passed me with these gentlemen fishing behind. They did not know me. I had only been a very short time in the district. I did not know Mr. Brackebush; I did not even know his name. As soon as ever they saw me approaching, Mr. Brackebush, who was not fishing but driving the launch, came down out of the cockpit and took the rod out of this man's hands and was fishing, while another man went up into the cockpit and drove the engine. I went on board and asked him for his license. He said, "I am not fishing." I said, "I know that, but you have been fishing. Have you a license?" I turned to Mr. Brackebush, and he said, "Where is your authority?" I showed it to him. He said, "I have no license; it is at home." I said, "You are supposed to carry a license with you. You are about the fiftieth or sixtieth person I have stuck up that has not had a license, and I have reported the matter to Wellington, and I am instructed to prosecute the first one. Now, has your friend a license or has he not?" He said, "I do not think he has got one." I said, "Very well, I will prosecute you for doing what you have done—deliberately trying to deceive me by taking the rod out of his hand and fishing." I prosecuted him. He had a lawyer. The case was called. I had to appear on behalf of the Department. The lawyer got up and pleaded guilty to both charges. One was fined £3 and costs—that was Mr. Robertson—and the other £1, with costs 7s. From that day until this the Department has been harassed by members of the Rod and Gun Club, so much so that they prosecuted me for taking fish in the execution of my duty and put me to the expense of attending the Court two days to defend the action of the Government in netting the lakes. I should like to read a letter, if you will allow me, to show what was going on when I arrived there. This is a part of my report to my General Manager: "Preservation of fish and game: This subject has received vigorous attention, and every effort has been extended to check poaching, but it must be confessed that it is one of the most difficult problems the Department has to contend with—firstly, on account of the number of boardinghouses in Rotorua whose proprietors are willing to purchase anything in the way of game or fish either in or out of season; secondly, there are certain shopkeepers whose business is very materially affected by a strict enforcement of the fisheries regulations regarding the illegal selling of trout. For years past many residents of Rotorua have made a regular income from the illegal sale of trout, which, of course, necessitated purchases of fishing-tackle to carry on their business. Now that very few, if any, are fishing for sale it means a certain loss to those holders of stocks in the fishing line; thirdly, on strictly enforcing that every person fishing must have a license, this has had its effect on the business of the launch-owners, as in the past some launch-owners have not troubled as to whether the person engaging the launch has a license or not, and quoted a price for hire of launch, rods, tackle, &c., for a day's fishing; but when it was pointed out to them (the launch-owners) that they were likely to get into trouble for having unlicensed persons fishing on their launches, it is thought that the extra charge for a license, together with hire of launch, has made the total expense for a day's fishing rather high for the ordinary man. It can be gathered from the above that many influences are at work to counteract the good work that is being done in the way of checking poaching, and any one who fearlessly carries out these arduous duties will be subjected to all kinds of insults and persecution." And I have been subject to it since I have been there.

4. *Mr. Dickson.*] Have you got the reply to that letter?—Yes: "Your memo. dated 21st ultimo having been referred to the Hon. the Minister I shall be glad if you will inform Mr. Moorhouse that the Minister has endorsed the papers 'Satisfactory.'"

5. Do you admit that the Auckland society blocked these rivers successfully, as was stated in that letter that was read by the clerk before you gave evidence this morning?—There is a difference between blocking the rivers altogether and blocking them to take the fish for spawning purposes.

6. You say that letter is not correct, do you?—It is correct as far as it goes, but it is misleading. I say it is impossible to erect barriers to stop the fish from going up during the spawning season—that is, to make a permanent barrier to stand from June, when the fish start to run up the rivers, until November or the end of August; but it is not impossible to erect barriers that will stand a fortnight or eight or nine days. We are doing that every day in order to take the fish.

7. You were not in Rotorua when that was done?—Yes. It has been done by Mr. Ayson.

8. I mean, when the Auckland society did it?—Yes. The Auckland society are allowed to take 300,000 ova free every year from the different lakes, and it is by means of the barriers that they take the ova. I hope you will not misunderstand me. The permanent barriers were supposed to be erected to block the fish from going up the river altogether; they were supposed to be an absolute permanency that was to stand all flood and all weathers. It was found impossible to erect barriers that would stand permanently. But it is not impossible to erect a smaller barrier across the river in order to take fish for spawning purposes, because you can erect it to-day and you will find eight or ten fish in the barrier to-morrow, and then perhaps it will be washed away.