

Used a 4½ in. mesh then, use 4½ in. to 5 in. mesh now. At the present time the best feed is found and the best fishing-grounds are the flats, No. 1 River to Halswell River, not far out from shore, say, quarter of a mile. Only catch good fish in shore there now, and along the Ninety-mile Beach side of the lake. It would improve our fishing to increase the size of the mesh a little during the summer fishing. All fish would die in small mesh if left down too long in consequence of rough weather. This would prevent too large a catch of the smaller fish, preventing glutting of the market, and consequent waste of fish. I do not think the lake flounders go out to sea. Have seen them coming in from the sea, but never going out. Years ago the fish used to spawn at the Maori pa. At the present time I think they spawn all round the lake alike. Get much less for flounders now than ten years ago. Use two miles of nets—that is, twenty nets. Nets last, if no rough weather, twelve months. My nets cost me only 10s. for the eighty-fathoms length; one mile, unslung, costs £2 17s. 6d.; slinging costs £3; altogether, say, £5 10s. per mile. Nets, if locally bought, would cost probably double as much. Have been down at the outlet when lake running out many times. Have only watched herrings and eels going out; have not seen any flounders. Was the first man who lived down there at the outlet. The average netting to each boat is a total length of about two miles.

Charles Johnston (fisherman, Lake Ellesmere): Have been fishing at the lake for fourteen years. Was never fishing in any other part of the world. Whole experience has been gained in the lake. Present average catch about two cases per day. Am satisfied with present size of mesh. Could not improve on it. Think that the more frequently the lake is opened the less flounders are to be obtained. Have lived at the opening from twelve to fourteen years. Have seen numbers of small flounders going out to sea when the lake has been open. The neighbouring farmers are catching a great quantity. My opinion is that fish spawn near present outlet at end of lake. Would be much better for flounder-fishing industry if the lake was permanently blocked. Have seen flounders spawning in other parts of the lake. Think the greater number spawn at the outlet end, because the most of the fish we catch there are full of spawn. We call the flounders we get in greatest numbers the yellow-belly. The smallest yellow-belly I have seen in spawn was about 6 in. in length. In spring a great many 6 in. fish in spawn. Black flounders are in spawn in June, July, and August. Have seen yellow-bellies in spawn in September, October, and November. Very seldom catch "three-corner" flounders over 9 in. Have never been aware of any small fish being kept in manure. Our daily number of nets spread averages about fifteen. Nets usually costs £1 12s. 6d. per 80 fathoms. Earnings average over £2 per week.

John Magaldo (fisherman, Lake Ellesmere): Have lived at and been fishing at lake for seventeen or eighteen years. No experience anywhere else. Quite satisfied with size of mesh. Have no nets less than 4½ in. mesh. Flounders are increasing in the lake. Have seen both large and small flounders running out of the outlet. Am satisfied with present system of measurement of mesh.

CHRISTCHURCH, 10TH MARCH, 1893.

Dr. Frankish (Christchurch): Some years ago I was delegated by the Acclimatisation Society to see the Colonial Treasurer with respect to legalising the size at which flounders should be taken. It was agreed that Government should be recommended to insist that no flounders should be taken under 9 in. This was on account of my having seen a very large number of flounders wasted owing to their small size. Some three years ago all the maritime powers sent delegates to London to a congress to protest against undersized sea-fish being sold. I suggest that flounders should not be allowed to be taken under 10 in. in length from snout to root of tail; that the size of the mesh should be 6 in., certainly not less than 5½ in. A close season for four months this year—September to December—seems highly desirable, if in the future we are to have a good supply of flounders from Lake Ellesmere, those four months covering the spawning-season. I also suggest that the spawning-ground within the lake and close to the Ninety-mile Beach should be pegged off, and never fished in the future. Drag-nets should be prohibited except during the first eight months of the year. I think the 2½ in. set-nets for catching mullet quite safe as against flounders if set so as float. The appointment of an inspector to see the law carried out is imperatively necessary. I have seen flounders coming into the lake many years ago with other fish, and I have caught sea-fish in the lake.

Edmund Pleasant (mariner, Lyttelton): I have had several years' fishing experience at Lyttelton. I have seen in the evidence given on Monday last that the boats on Lake Ellesmere are making £7 10s. per week on the average. I am certain they are not doing so. It also states there are twenty-one boats, which would represent forty-two men working. There are not so many as that on the roll of the union for Lake Ellesmere. I was President of the Union when it was first started. I do not think there are more than twenty-five men there altogether. The statement also is incorrect that they average four cases a day per boat. I think the proper number should be less than twenty cases per day for the whole. In November, 1891, the estimate for the whole of the union for eight months' work was about £2,300, and this included Lake Ellesmere, Lyttelton, Sumner, and some fish from Wellington. I think the average earnings of each boat per week would be less than £4. I do not agree with Professor Hutton's statement that the flounders that go to sea cannot return to the lake. If they do not return they thrive better in the sea, and are often caught at Lyttelton and Akaroa. The fishermen are able to tell the flounders that have been bred in the lake. There are two auctioneers, one for the port and Sumner, and one for the lake. I think that half the fish-supply for Christchurch comes from Sumner and Lyttelton, and half the value of the whole supply. In the summer few flounders come to Christchurch from the port and Sumner, but in winter most of, and the best flounders come from Lyttelton and Sumner. A case of flounders in the winter from Lyttelton or Sumner would fetch double the price—say, £2—that these would from Lake Ellesmere. The yellow-belly is the commonest flounder found in the lake. More black flounders are caught in Lake Ellesmere than in the sea. The "four-corner" flounder is