

has gone back on account of the imported oysters; people will not give the price for the Ruapuke oysters, or Stewart Island oysters, which cannot be sold under 5s. 6d. a dozen tins, or £1 2s. a case. The American can be bought at 18s. the case.

5. Does each tin contain two dozen?—Yes; but our tins only contain one dozen, as the oysters are larger.

6. Does each tin contain the same weight?—Yes; but sometimes the American tins contain cockles instead of oysters.

7. *Mr. Tanner.*] You have not tried tinning cockles?—No.

8. *The Chairman.*] Are there many people engaged in the fishing industry?—In fishing and oystering there are engaged about three hundred men and twenty-one vessels.

9. Supposing the view you take were adopted, what effect would it have?—Well, we should take care of the oysters; otherwise within ten years there will be none left.

10. Why?—After the cutters get full of oysters they run into Ruapuke and pick out all the small oysters and throw them overboard, when they die. A law should be passed that the oysters must be “cultched” in the oyster-bed from which they are taken; or, if the weather comes on bad, the fishermen should be made to throw them all overboard on the bed before they seek shelter. At the oyster-beds there are what we call cultch-stones and different kinds of stuff on which the oysters feed. They will not feed anywhere else, and if thrown over away from the beds, or cultching-grounds, they die. Sorting them and returning the small ones to the bed is what we call cultching. Last season our oysters were so poor that people could not eat them. That was on account of the small oysters being taken from the oyster-beds.

11. You say the oyster-beds are being ruined through careless treatment?—Yes.

12. And through the small oysters not being returned to their natural bed?—Yes.

13. Is it a fact that there are certain parts of the bottom of the sea that are more suitable for the oyster to live on than others?—Yes; in some places the oysters will not live. At Caroline Bay (Ruapuke) they will not live.

14. Do they require some particular kind of food?—Have you ever seen Chesterfield guano—a lot caked together? Well, the food the oysters feed on is just like that guano caked together, and there is also a kind of sand mixed with it, and if the oysters are tipped out in an unsuitable place they will not grow. They should be returned to the salt water in the proper place; they ought to be cultched before leaving the proper bed, so as to insure their being returned to their natural bed.

15. Does it affect the young ones injuriously to be kept a long time out of water?—It would not matter for a day or two.

16. Supposing rough weather came on, what would the cutters do?—They would run for Caroline Harbour; and, if my suggestions were adopted, they would have to throw over the lot. If the oysters are biting well they generally have 1,000 dozen at the end of a day's work to pick out.

17. Have you ever made any representations to the Minister of Marine direct on the subject?—An inspector should be appointed to see the law carried out.

*Mr. Glasgow:* The matter has never been brought before the department.

18. *Mr. Tanner.*] Are you aware that on Lake Ellesmere there is an inspector who is frequently afloat when they are catching fish?—Yes; and he winks the other eye. I heard the other day of a trout being caught in Lake Ellesmere, and the Magistrate asked, “What fish is that?” and the fisherman said, “I don't know.” In this river I have seen thirty-seven trout killed purposely and thrown on the beach. A fisherman on this river, Charle Riske, and who has been thirty-two years at Sandy Point, has not made food on account of the trout eating all the small flounders. I think the weight at which blue-cod can be taken should be raised from 8oz. to 20oz.

19. *Mr. Mackenzie.*] Is it possible to make beds in some sheltered place as receiving-grounds for fishermen to throw over young oysters into?—Yes. The Bluff Oyster Company, in 1889, dumped some oysters at the head of the bay, and last year they got a few there; but the young oysters will not increase.

20. Is it possible to form oyster-beds?—Yes.

21. Would it not be rather expensive?—No.

22. If you cannot enforce the law in the immediate neighbourhood, would you suggest that some ground should be formed in some sheltered place?—The only place I know is the Mokomoko, but that is too far away.

23. Did not Mr. Ward assist in that respect?—I believe there is a gentleman now on his way to see the Minister of Marine about the inspectorship.

24. Regarding the fishing, do you think it is possible to establish a bigger commerce in fish?—Yes. All the blue-cod caught here go to Melbourne. Three cases, containing 1200lb. of fish each, were sent to Melbourne in one day.

25. Do you think it possible to establish fisheries around the coast that will catch other fish besides cod: there is tarakihi?—Yes. I wish to see the blue-cod weight raised to 20oz., because they are getting scarcer, or, by measurement, to 12in.

*Mr. Glasgow:* Fishermen complain they cannot judge the weight.

26. *Mr. Stevens.*] With regard to the appointment of an inspector to see that the cultching takes place on the proper oyster-beds, how would you propose to pay the inspector?—I should propose that there should be a duty of 10s. for each insulated case of the fish exported, and on oysters 6d. a barrel or bag. Sometimes fish are sent to Sydney in the freezing-chambers of the “Mararoa” and “Waihora,” and I would place a duty of 2d. a case on them.

27. *Mr. Tanner.*] What is the largest number of cases sent over to Australia in a week?—Five now, but I have known of 400 odd cases being shipped in a single day. Each case contains 63lb. of fish.