

47. The average would be about eight to ten in the season?—Yes.

48. And all fairly successful?—Yes, fairly.

49. What is the position now? Is that a good fishing-ground?—It is not to be compared with what it was.

50. As compared with eight to ten boats formerly, what would be the number now?—You seldom see one.

51. The average would not be more than one?—No.

52. *Mr. Mitchelson.*] What is the distance between the points you refer to?—Scarcely a mile.

53. *Mr. Bruce.*] Of course, all localities of the fishing are liable to good and bad times?—More or less.

54. But in regard to this particular part of the fishery, would you say it was always bad?—It is very exceptional if it is good where some few years back it was the reverse. It was exceptional if it was bad through the summer.

55. During the time you were fishing some years ago, was the river up to where you used to fish fairly full of fry and young fish in the season?—Yes, in the warmer months.

56. Do you consider that the fish spawn in these fresh-water rivers?—Yes.

57. Would one find the same amount of fry that one would find, say, ten years ago?—No.

58. Nothing in proportion?—No.

59. Do you find any at all?—Very small quantities.

60. This applies to the Thames River?—Yes.

61. Does it apply to the Piako River?—No.

62. The fry in the Piako is as ample in the season as ever?—Apparently so.

63. Occasionally, you are aware, there are a good many dead fish—eels and flounders principally—in the Thames River?—Yes.

64. You very often find these fish delivered at your freezing-works?—Occasionally.

65. You know they are stranded and dead fish?—Yes; we know the difference at once.

66. During the time you were fishing there did you ever see anything similar to that?—Yes, as many as four or five dozen fish on one ebb tide.

67. Did you see anything of that kind when you were fishing prior to some years ago?—No; it is only of recent years.

68. How many years?—Something like six or eight years.

69. Would it be possible for a net left down between a tide to account for this?—To a certain extent; but a fisherman would know the difference between a fish merely drowned in a net and one killed.

70. What is the size of the mesh?—Four-inch.

71. Would an eel drown in a 4 in. mesh or a 3 in. mesh?—No. There are very few eels in the river we would catch.

72. Would you occasionally get dead flounders in a net, supposing the net was left down during the length of a tide?—Occasionally you would get one.

73. But, as a rule, do the flounders get killed in the meshes of the net?—They do, more or less. Occasionally they break away when drowned, and we should get them again.

74. Supposing a net were left down in the river, say, on a flood tide, and it was not drawn, I presume that net would be swept above the poles on the reversing of the tide, and would swing in and be practically turned inside out?—Yes.

75. And you consider any fish caught on the flood would be tossed out on the turn of the tide?—Yes. Of course, it is against our interests to allow the fish to go out. We take them out before the tide has finished running.

76. Is it the practice of any persons that you are aware of to leave the nets down?—Over a slack tide during the fishing.

77. Supposing a fisherman were fishing the bank, say, in any portion of the Thames River, and was going into Shortland to sell the fish, and not going back the same day, would he lift his nets?—Yes.

78. Always?—Necessarily he would.

79. If a fisherman was merely going to Shortland with fish and for a supply of food, he would not deem it necessary to lift them?—Of course, he should return before the tide turns.

80. You are satisfied the dead fish are due to something coming down the river?—Yes.

81. The prevailing winds at the Thames are from south-west to north-west?—Yes.

82. And they cause the silt to settle along the foreshore?—Yes.

83. What is the value of the boats and gear engaged in the fishing industry here?—I should say somewhere about £20,000.

84. They are principally oil-launches?—Yes.

85. *The Chairman.*] We have had it in evidence that there are about forty-two or forty-three boats engaged here: what is the value of each one—about £500?—The boats and gear would represent about that.

86. What is the general tonnage of the best boats?—Three or four tons.

87. What horse-power engines? They range from five to twelve. There is a lot of gear. I had at one time 150 pounds' worth of gear myself.

88. How many boats was that for?—One boat.

89. *Mr. Bruce.*] Have you any idea as to the annual value of the fish caught here?—I have never gone into it closely.

90. So forty boats are engaged in the fishing. What would be the average catch per boat per week?—I should say £6 or £7.

91. Taking an average all the year round?—I should say about that.

92. *Mr. Mitchelson.*] How many in each boat?—Usually two; sometimes there are more.