

REPORT.

SIR,

Wellington, 14th August, 1914.

I have now the honour to present my preliminary report upon the survey which I have made of the fisheries of the Dominion of New Zealand. This report embraces a series of recommendations bearing directly upon the objects set forth in your letter of the 22nd February, 1913, which letter resulted in my present visit to this Dominion with the sanction of the Government of the Dominion of Canada.

A full and detailed report will follow later; and the recommendations which I now make will be supported by extracts from letters and representations submitted to me by practical men, fishermen, fish-dealers, &c., and by anglers and sportsmen who have most willingly come forward at my various conferences and have given me a mass of evidence of the most valuable and interesting character.

My work began with the sea cruise round the Dominion in the Government steamer "Hinemoa," and it was followed by a land tour, in the course of which I visited the principal lakes, rivers, lagoons, and waters of New Zealand generally, occupying nearly four months in these investigations. My later report will include an ample exposition of the grounds upon which my recommendations are based. Not only have I received every help from the leading men engaged in the fishing industry and from the principal fishermen in each locality, but I have been greatly assisted by the kindly comments and suggestions which have been made in the more important newspapers of the Dominion, regardless of political colour. One important journal said, "The investigations which Professor Prince, of Canada, is at present making into the whole subject of our fisheries will have a rare value for New-Zealanders if they furnish further knowledge of this asset and cause the fishing industry to be conducted on a broader and more scientific basis than it has been hitherto." Another prominent journal stated, "We look forward with interest to the recommendations of Professor Prince upon sea-fishing"; and added that if the result was a better supply of fish "every city, town, and hamlet in New Zealand, when supplied with fresh and wholesome fish at prices which now appear ridiculously small, the community will realize that the seas, instead of being waste and barren, are seas which yield vast and ceaseless harvests to the toil of man." The most prominent newspaper in Southland, in a leading article, spoke as follows: "Professor Prince has had a wide experience of the habits of food-fishes and organization of the fishing industry in a latitude that corresponds more or less closely to our own, and his advice should be of the greatest possible service to the Marine Department as well as to the acclimatization societies which have done so much to advertise and popularize New Zealand by stocking our streams with trout and other fresh-water fish." And the same journal added that my views should have the beneficial effect of helping the general public to realize the enormous present and prospective value of the natural resources contained not only in our lakes and rivers, but in the seas that surround us. Further reference was made in another daily paper as follows: "If Professor Prince can put his finger upon the cause of the high prices which obtain, and outline a scheme which will give the public cheaper fish, he will lay New Zealand under a heavy debt." And a similar opinion was expressed by another newspaper, which said, "It is to be hoped that Professor Prince will be in a position to indicate the lines upon which measures to develop the industry and to secure a cheap and abundant supply of fish should succeed." Finally, an evening journal of prominence concluded a notice of my work by saying, "If his visit has no other result than to impress us with the necessity of taking steps which might have been taken years ago without outside advice it will be well worth its cost to the Dominion."

My work conveniently divided itself into three parts: Firstly, investigation of the sea-fishing grounds, including tests with the otter-trawl dredge, baited lines, &c.; secondly, visits to the principal lakes and rivers, and inspection of hatcheries and rearing-ponds; thirdly, conferences in all the principal fishing-ports with fishermen, fish-merchants, anglers, Government officers, and parties interested in fish and fisheries generally, and the inspection of fish-markets in inland towns, fish cold-storage establishments, fish-shops, and the like. I may add that I also visited the Marine Laboratory and Fish-hatchery at Portobello, near Port Chalmers, and saw the museums at Wellington, Christchurch, Auckland, Dunedin, and other centres where collections of fish are exhibited. The plan I followed was indeed precisely the same as that which I adopted when I first assumed the position of Dominion Commissioner of Fisheries in Canada over twenty years ago, and I was thus able to obtain a wider and more thorough knowledge of the great fishery resources of British North America than had ever been possible before, and probably not paralleled by that of any other official in the Canadian or any other fisheries service.

Upon my arrival on the 7th April, when I had the honour of being greeted by yourself, accompanied by Mr. Allport, Secretary, Marine Department, Mr. Ayson, Chief Inspector of Fisheries, Mr. Hislop, Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, and Mr. C. Ayson, Manager of the Government Salmon-hatcheries, I immediately commenced my coastal cruise, testing the sea-fishing areas of the shores of the North and South Islands, including Stewart Island.

It is not possible in this place to make proper allusion to the officials and gentlemen generally who have given me most valuable assistance in my work, and I shall make full reference in my later report; but I cannot forbear mentioning my indebtedness to Mr. George Allport, Secretary to the Department, and to Mr. L. F. Ayson, Chief Inspector, who had been detailed by yourself to accompany me throughout my tour, and of whose mass of practical knowledge and mastery of fishery methods and fish-culture I had every advantage, as Mr. Ayson was most anxious and willing to unsparingly assist me at every stage in my investigations. I have also to thank Captain Bollons, the experienced and