

boundary, and the other half within the United States boundary. With such estimates and comparisons before us there is every ground for being optimistic in regard to the future of New Zealand fisheries. Their extent and possibilities have not been adequately realized.

FISHERIES ARE A NATIONAL ASSET.

A mistaken view which is not uncommon in New Zealand, as in other countries, regarding fish resources lies in the assumption that the marine and fresh-water fisheries in local waters are the peculiar possession of the community living in that area. Fishermen and fish-merchants too often take this limited view, and resident anglers and sportsmen are prone to share in the same parochial feeling. I am familiar in Canada with this same mistaken view, though, thanks to the spread of Government reports and of enlightening information, the view is now largely a thing of the past. At one time, for instance, Nova Scotia fishermen regarded the lobsters in their own localities as their special property, and raised objection to taking protective measures, such as close seasons, &c., declaring that they wanted no such restrictions, and that if the lobsters were depleted it was "their own lookout." The fishermen were wont to reply to the argument—that unless protective laws were devised the lobsters would become depleted—by saying, "The lobsters are our fish, and if we destroy them it is no one's concern but ours." It was pointed out that Montreal, Ottawa, and even a distant city like Winnipeg, situated many thousand miles from the lobster-grounds, had a right to claim an interest in the lobster resources, and to insist that, being a national food-supply, the Federal Government was in duty bound to maintain the lobster resources of the country. The fishing population now have generally adopted the view that all Canada has a right to dictate how her fisheries—or, indeed, any other national resource of land or water—shall be treated. Dominion control is the only effective control, both for the whole country and for the local residents directly concerned. It has not been unusual for sportsmen in certain localities to argue that the rivers and their finny inhabitants were a local possession, in which New Zealand as a whole had no direct concern. Such parochialism involves a great danger; but it is not a danger confined to fisheries. I observed at a recent Farmers' Union conference in Wellington that representatives of the whole Dominion protested against this tendency to consider only narrow local interests, and one prominent speaker protested against making the conference develop into "a glorified provincial conference instead of a Dominion conference," and it was insisted that important questions should not be approached from a narrow provincial standpoint. I observed a similar protest voiced in parliamentary debate recently when the subject of education was under discussion, and it was emphatically declared in the House of Representatives that local interests should be subordinated in such an important matter, and parochial views should be deprecated.

HIGH COST OF LIVING AND CHEAP FISH.

Fish in New Zealand is, in my opinion, high-priced. It should be cheaper, and thus encourage a vastly increased demand. Everywhere I find that my opinion is supported by intelligent citizens, with the exception of a few persons who still cling to the antiquated view that small supplies and high prices for fish products yield greater profits to those engaged in the fisheries. My opinion is that fish can be cheapened, to the benefit of all in the industry and to the great benefit of the public at large. Fish forms a good nutritious food and a popular food, and it should be a cheap food, because the finny tribes in the sea propagate and feed themselves, and are ready to be secured for the market without any trouble, care, or expense on the part of man—wholly unlike sheep and cattle, which demand infinite care and expense before they are ready for market. Yet it is a remarkable fact that this fish-food product provided free of cost by bountiful nature is as expensive as, usually more expensive than, beef and mutton. One correspondent wrote to me recently that the price of sea-fish at the present time is exorbitant. If the fishermen have a good haul, great quantities are consigned back to the briny ocean in order to keep up the price of this fish in the local markets.

Many reasons are urged for the prevailing high price of fish. Some blame the method of sale. As one fisherman in a printed letter stated, "Our catching-price for hapuka or groper is 1s. 5d. per fish irrespective of weight, and as the average run of this fish is 20 lb. or 30 lb., we do not get 2d. per pound from the dealers. If this fish were paid by weight and we got 1d. per pound for them we would be better satisfied." A prominent fish-dealer admits the rise in price. He says it is due to the fact that fishermen neglect the catching of blue cod, butterfish, &c., because hapuka and groper are plentiful and pay them better than any other fish. The neglected fish are consequently higher in price. It is claimed that Cook Strait fishermen will not catch blue cod and earn only £8 to £10 when they can with less trouble go out ten or twelve miles from Wellington Harbour and catch a hundred and fifty hapuka and earn over £20. Whatever the real reason may be, the price of fish to the public could, without loss to fishermen or dealers, be made far more reasonable; and I do not hesitate to say that one great reason for the high price is the fact that the catches are not always utilized or marketed, and there is consequently a great waste of fish.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE FISHES OF NEW ZEALAND.

A survey of the fisheries of New Zealand and of the various important species inhabiting the Dominion waters emphasizes the contrast between the southern fish and fisheries and those of the north, especially the great fisheries of the North Atlantic. The various kinds of fish most abundant in New Zealand waters recall the species familiar in the markets of southern Europe. The great abundance of the spiny-finned fishes corresponds with the food fishes found off the Spanish and north African coast and along the shores of the Mediterranean. There is little resemblance between these fishes and those of the northern waters, such as the Canadian, British, or Norwegian fisheries. The most