

authorities generally are fairly unanimous in their view that a five-, eight-, or ten-mile limit must ere long be adopted. New Zealand can lead the way by promulgating a regulation declaring larger territorial limits to be established round her shores.

TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTY.

That the transportation difficulty in regard to fish should be easily solved is plain from the fact that beef or mutton, raised with great labour and at much expense, are actually transported by land and sea round two-thirds of the world's circumference, and sold in the most distant markets at a little greater price per pound than fish is sold in New Zealand towns fifty, twenty, or even two miles from the sea.

THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE ACCLIMATIZATION SOCIETIES.

There are, I understand, over thirty acclimatization societies in New Zealand, including one or two new societies recently organized; and the work accomplished by these societies has been of a most remarkable and fruitful character. For nearly fifty years members of these societies have zealously and enthusiastically carried on the acclimatization of sporting fish and of game. The success of the introduction into New Zealand of some of the best fresh-water fishes is widely recognized. Fishery authorities in all parts of the world have viewed with admiration the great work accomplished in the past. No really excellent species of game fish were found in the lakes and rivers of the Dominion, if we except the grayling. It is unnecessary to refer to the magnificent English or brown trout, rainbow trout, Loch Leven trout, and other varieties which have so flourished since their introduction into New Zealand as to far exceed in size and other qualities the original fish native to British and North American waters. In the early days a handful of enthusiasts, and, later, formal organizations, equally stimulated by zeal for fish and fishing, procured supplies of eggs and of young fish at considerable expense, and with infinite trouble initiated fish-culture in New Zealand. Such lakes as Wakatipu, Wanaka, Te Anau, Manapouri, Rotorua, and Taupo would not have contained the fine fish in which they have abounded but for these early efforts on the part of the acclimatization societies. The first trout introduced were brown trout, hatched in October, 1868, by the Otago Acclimatization Society; and since then more or less extensive importations of the various species mentioned have been made. (For details see Mr. L. F. Ayson's address to the Fourth International Fishery Congress, Washington, U.S.A., 1908.)

A review of the present work of the acclimatization societies, apart from the operations carried on in regard to game animals, demonstrates that the time has come for an important change. I shall treat in detail the work of these societies and of the reasons for my recommendations in my later report, and it must suffice to simply point out now—

(1.) These societies are voluntary associations not responsible to the Government, and are of the nature of fishing or recreation clubs from a strict point of view.

(2.) The scope and character of their work fluctuate and depend upon local funds and other conditions unrelated to the needs or the possibilities of each district.

(3.) Licenses are issued by these societies, which collect revenue of a public official nature with the cognizance of the Government.

(4.) They appoint fishery officers whose work corresponds to that of Government patrol officers in other countries.

(5.) They build and operate hatcheries more or less complete, but often very limited in their scope, and characterized by an erratic and desultory mode of carrying on fish-culture. Such operations in other countries are carried on extensively and most effectively under a Government Bureau or Department.

(6.) The work of each society is dictated by local members whose essential qualification is a contribution to the funds of such society or the payment of a fishing or shooting license fee (£1 1s. per annum). (The membership fees vary from 5s. to 10s. or more per annum.)

It is plain that these societies, so far as concerns fisheries, are in an anomalous position and have to a large extent outlived their original purpose and utility; and a proportion of the members, it must be granted, are not so enthusiastic and self-sacrificing as the fathers of acclimatization in New Zealand, of whom indeed very few now remain. All honour and credit must be freely given to the pioneer members of the acclimatization societies for the work, in some respects unexampled, which they have accomplished. These societies at present include a considerable number of active enthusiasts whose views and experience are of great value; and if any change is decided upon with respect to the status of these societies and the issuing of licenses and collecting of public revenue, it is desirable that nothing should be done to alienate the interest of these enthusiasts or deprive the country of the experience they have gained.

In my opinion it would be desirable to create an Advisory Board composed of representatives proportionate to the membership of the societies. These representatives should attend an annual conference in Wellington for the purpose of conferring with the chief fishery officers and laying before the Department at such conference suggestions and proposals which might be considered by the Department. An Advisory Board would not affect the responsibility of a Fishery Department such as I strongly recommend should be created for the administration and preservation of the fisheries, corresponding to the Government Fishery Departments of the leading countries of Europe and the American Continent. The Advisory Board would indeed correspond to the meeting of "representative authorities" in England, which includes twenty-one local Fishery Committees and Boards of Conservators as provided by the British Sea-fisheries Regulation of 1888. This representative body has no executive functions, but has done valuable work in discussing important fishery problems as they arose and conferring with the eight or nine Chief Fishery Inspectors, including the permanent head