

As will be seen from his report, Professor Prince is very favourably impressed with the extent of our coastal fishing-grounds and of the quantity and quality of the fish obtainable, also with the lakes, rivers, and inland waters of the Dominion; and in comparing the fisheries of New Zealand with those of some other countries he says, "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."

Professor Prince makes useful and practical recommendations with regard to the organization and development of both the sea and fresh-water fish, and I hope the Government will see its way to act on these recommendations with as little delay as possible.

Besides the general tour with Professor Prince, I have since made during the year special visits of inspection to Bluff, Invercargill, Dunedin, Oamaru, Timaru, Lyttelton, Lake Ellesmere, Kaikoura, Marlborough Sounds, Nelson, Napier, Auckland, Whangarei, Bay of Islands, and Kaipara. I have also made a special inspection of the Hauraki Gulf, Bay of Islands, and Whangarei oyster-beds, and also an inspection of the toheroa-beds on the Rangitira Beach, near Helensville, and the beds between North Kaipara Heads and Maunganni Bluff.

With regard to the supply of fish brought to market at the various fishing-ports during the year and the condition of the fisheries generally, I beg to give the following information from the local Inspectors' reports and from my own observations.

*Bluff and Stewart Island.*—The Inspector at Bluff reports that during the year 8,045 cwt. of fish, valued at £11,263, was landed, and of this quantity 4,445 cwt., chiefly blue cod, was exported to Australia. During the season three steamers and four auxiliary vessels were employed dredging for oysters, the steamers generally worked the "east" beds and the other vessels the "west" beds. The total quantity of oysters landed during the season was 24,793 sacks, valued at £12,396 10s., of which 3,285 were exported to Hobart and Melbourne. The quality of the oysters during the last two seasons has been exceptionally good. Owing to the intercolonial steamers now running triweekly instead of weekly as formerly, a set-back has been given to the export trade of both fish and oysters.

The fishermen at Stewart Island report good catches of blue cod and other market fish when the weather was favourable. A good deal of stormy weather was experienced in the spring and early summer, but notwithstanding this the earnings of the fishermen have been well maintained.

In the New River Estuary and Riverton, flounders have been fairly plentiful throughout the year.

*Otago District.*—The monthly reports supplied by Mr. Adams, Inspector of Fisheries for the Otago District, show that during the winter and spring bad weather frequently interfered with fishing operations, but notwithstanding this the market was fairly well supplied from the local fishing-grounds. Good catches of flounders, trevalli, &c., were frequently made by the seine-net men inside the harbour at times when bad weather prevented the trawlers and line men from going outside. Through the summer and autumn fish have been plentiful, and in fine weather splendid catches of the best market fish were made, and the market has been very well supplied.

At Nugget Bay the fishermen say it has been a poor season. Unfavourable weather up to the end of the year interfered with fishing; since then fair catches of groper and blue cod have been made.

At Pounawea, where the fishing is all seining in the tideway of the Catlins Estuary, good catches of flounders have been made.

At Tautuku there are now five boats fishing and getting good catches. With proper facilities for getting the fish to market this place is capable of supplying a large quantity of fish for the Dunedin and other city markets.

At Moeraki the catches of groper and blue-cod have been poor all through the winter, and since then fishermen report that the supply has not been equal to that of an average season.

At Oamaru poor catches of groper were made up to the end of the year; since then the supply has improved.

*Timaru.*—The Collector of Customs, in his report on the fisheries, says that "the supply of fish has only been moderately good, the catches of groper by the line fishermen being much smaller than in past years." Taking the year all through it has been a fairly successful one for the trawlers, and in the autumn there was an improvement in the supply of groper on the lining-grounds, and within the few weeks some large catches have been made. During the year a fish-market has been established by the fishermen close to the fishermen's wharf. The building is leased to the fishermen by the Harbour Board at a nominal rent, and the fish are sold by the fishermen direct to the public. The market has been a great success. It is well supported by the people of Timaru, who avail themselves of the opportunity of getting fish fresh from the boats at a reasonable price, while the fisherman gets a better price for his catch, as a good part of the profit usually made by the retail fish salesman now goes into the pocket of the man who catches the fish.

*Christchurch.*—The local fishing-grounds have for a considerable time supplied only a very small proportion of the fish required for this market, the principal supply coming from the various fishing-ports outside the district—at certain seasons from as far south as Nugget Bay and north to Wellington. As is to be expected, the supply coming forward is frequently insufficient, and, in the summer months at any rate, often not in the best condition. During the past year the supply has been somewhat erratic: for some time there was a considerable scarcity, but lately a good supply has been coming forward. With the extensive fishing-grounds which exist in the Canterbury Bight and to the north of Akaroa there is no reason why the City of Christchurch and district should not be well supplied with fresh fish from the local fishing-grounds. Having prospected these grounds, I am convinced that good-sized trawlers with insulated packing-chambers to store the fish should do well on the grounds I have mentioned, particularly to the south of the Akaroa Peninsula. Such vessels could stay out several days at a time and land in port once or twice a week with a cargo of fish.