

distributing, and, where necessary, preserving the fish. To-day the fisheries are administered as part of the Marine Department (which is largely concerned with shipping and lighthouses), while both the Tourist and the Internal Affairs Departments are concerned with fresh-water fishing. The Committee is of opinion that the fisheries should be a distinct and separate branch of the Marine Department, with a staff of its own composed of men who have a special knowledge of the work.

Catching.

The Committee, after much consideration, has come to the conclusion that the only way to provide a regular and adequate supply of fish for the needs of our people at prices within the reach of all is by trawling. The trawlers should be of the most modern and approved type, both in size and equipment, able to travel considerable distances and to be largely independent of weather conditions. The Government of New South Wales has for some years been engaged both in catching and distributing fish. Queensland is following on similar lines. Municipal enterprise in the Auckland District has done something in the same direction, and has been fairly successful—at any rate, fish is sold in the Auckland market at a much cheaper rate than in any of the other large centres; but little has been accomplished elsewhere in New Zealand. The Committee is of opinion that private enterprise alone cannot be depended upon to undertake fishing-operations on an adequate scale, and recommends that the State engage in the business. Those who are privately engaged in the industry should receive assistance from the State by way of loan to encourage them to purchase larger and more powerful boats. The State should also offer to purchase the whole of their catches.

The work of thoroughly prospecting the fishing-grounds section by section in a vessel specially adapted for this purpose should be undertaken at the earliest moment.

Preservation for Market.

All the witnesses agreed that one of the causes of the high price of fish was that all the catches did not reach the market, and that if the fishermen could rely on every fish caught being purchased from them they could afford to sell at a much lower price. This object can be attained by the establishment of cool-storage and icemaking plants near the fishing-grounds. Such plants will enable surplus catches to be dealt with, and will ensure all fish reaching the market in good condition. It will be necessary for the State to take in hand this work wherever it is engaged in trawling. In other cases it should either establish or assist in the establishment of such plants.

Export.

It is a remarkable fact that in 1912 our importation of dried, salted, and canned fish amounted to no less than £108,185, and last year, notwithstanding war conditions, the amount was over £104,000. With the superabundance of fish in our waters, instead of importing we should have a large export trade. The Government should encourage the tinning, curing, and commercial preparation of fish food. The canning of crayfish is specially mentioned, as there is a large supply all around the New Zealand coast; and the market has already been opened up for us by the Government of Cape Colony, where they have the same process. The Committee is assured that this has the prospect of becoming a large industry.

Prevention of Waste.

Fish-chilling and icemaking plants, while preventing loss of fish in warm weather, will go a long way towards preventing the great waste of fish that takes place throughout the Dominion owing to fish becoming stale by the time it reaches the market. Apart from this phase of the question there is a very serious loss through the non-utilization of waste products, from which fish-oil and fish manure might be manufactured. Any scheme, therefore, for the development of our fisheries should