

The officers of the Department of Industries and Commerce, to whom this work was entrusted, proceeded with their investigation, and will submit a report at an early date. The sub-committee will then be called together to consider the information that has been secured and submit suggestions to the Development of Industries Committee for improving the conditions which now obtain.

In addition to the collection of the above-mentioned information the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research is making inquiries into refrigerating processes, &c., and much valuable data will be available on this important aspect of the trade.

In regard to the sale of New Zealand fish in Australia, the Department has received many disturbing reports of unnecessary and uneconomic price-cutting on the part of exporters who are supplying that market. While there is no desire to interfere in any manner with the industry, it is nevertheless disturbing to know that the non-co-operative method which appears to characterize the present position is reflecting itself adversely on prices being offered to New Zealand fishermen. It is hoped that the efforts of the committee in bringing about greater co-ordination and co-operation will be successful in obtaining more satisfactory remuneration for fishermen and payable prices for exporters.

The Government has been of material assistance to the industry by obtaining concessions from the Commonwealth Government in the duty-free entry of all New Zealand fresh or smoked fish into Australia. Freedom from primage duty and sales tax has also been conceded. The results of these material benefits are reflected in the substantial increase in the exports of frozen fish to Australia, the figures for the past three years being as under: 1932, £35,804; 1933, £45,400; 1934, £93,422; 1935 (six months), £50,034. The 1934 figures increased by over 100 per cent.

The total exports of fish to all countries for the past three years are shown as follows: 1932, £37,794; 1933, £52,254; 1934, £100,956.

UTILIZATION OF THE EEL.

It has always been known that the fresh-water eel is available in our lakes and rivers in considerable quantities, and numerous attempts have been made by various interests to turn this fish to economic use. A few years ago this Department, in co-operation with the Marine Department and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, went into the matter of finding how the eel could be caught, prepared, frozen, and placed on the European market. Experiments extending over two years were carried out, and it was demonstrated that the eel could be successfully placed on the London market in prime condition, and 6d. per pound was offered for eels in this condition. Previous attempts by various parties operating at numerous places from Auckland to the Bluff had met with failure.

The trade has never been seriously catered for, as the syndicate with which the Department was co-operating did not think that 6d. per pound provided them a sufficient return on their outlay.

Following these efforts a concern, Dominion Canning Co., Ltd., of Greytown, started a cannery and put canned eels on the local market and exported considerable quantities to the United Kingdom. The commodity has not taken on, although the product has been considerably improved since the company started operations. There seems to be a prejudice against the use of eels as a food, although modern scientific research has demonstrated that the eel contains vitamins of the greatest value, which should recommend its universal use as an article of diet.

The eel has always been esteemed in Europe from ancient times as a food fish, and it is known that the Maori relied on it for food purposes to a very large extent up to very recent times.

The Dominion Canning Co., Ltd., is now kippering or smoking the eel previous to canning, and it is thought that this method of preparation will make the canned article more attractive.

EEL LEATHER.

Mr. J. H. Nightingall, of Wellington, a well-known consulting leather chemist and research engineer in the tanning industry, has devoted some time to the matter of utilizing eel-skins for the production of fine leathers, and has been successful in producing leather which it is anticipated will be keenly sought for in the fine-leather trade. The utilization of the eel for economic purposes is now approaching a practical solution.

EGG-EXPORT INDUSTRY.

Since the passing of the Poultry-runs Registration Act of 1933 the poultry industry has been in a position to organize itself upon a better basis. In all matters relating to the marketing of eggs overseas the Department has kept in close contact with the Poultry Board, and has from time to time passed on relative market intelligence information received from various sources, chiefly from the High Commissioner and the New Zealand Trade Commissioner in Canada. Although it has in the past been difficult to arrange for adequate freight accommodation at the appropriate time, it is hoped that no great inconvenience will be caused in this connection during the coming season.

Exports to the United Kingdom over the past five years have shown a steady advance:—

						Dozen.	£
1930	..	..	..	..	..	24,240	1,344
1931	..	..	..	..	..	111,480	5,646
1932	..	..	..	..	..	160,212	7,574
1933	..	..	..	..	..	325,975	15,784
1934	..	..	..	..	..	381,870	18,166

During the coming season, when it is expected that all shipments will arrive in the United Kingdom during the December quarter, it is anticipated that at least 15,000 crates (of 30 dozen each) will be despatched—i.e., 450,000 dozen.