

Agreeing that the whole of the fishery industry ought to be conducted on the assumption that it is a national asset, and to be safeguarded as such, the majority of the exporters showed a willingness to participate in any movement leading towards co-ordination of the industry along national lines, although naturally they sought the right to be able to sell to the best advantage. For instance, it was agreed that the highest standards of handling, processing, packing, and freezing methods were essential, and, further, that there should be a greater uniformity in the size of cases and the description of their contents.

Sufficient has already been said to stress the need for the employment of improved and co-ordinated methods of marketing, and, in our opinion, both in regard to internal and external marketing, some central authority, with Government representation (together with subsidiary provincial advisory committees), appears essential in order to bring about the highest state of efficiency in marketing the product with which we are concerned. While the whole question of supply is fundamental to all others, emphasis is laid here upon the problems of marketing rather than those of production, which are subject to some measure of control under the provisions of the Fisheries Act, 1908, and its amendments (see under "Administration—Fisheries Act").

The Auckland Fish Export Committee, which was set up in September last, was charged with dealing with the immediate problem of export stocks, but so closely associated are the questions of external and internal marketing that due cognizance has necessarily been taken of both these subjects in their relationship to one another. An extension of the authority conferred upon the Auckland Fish Export Committee therefore becomes necessary. In regard to a central authority, it would appear that this should consist of representatives appointed from the personnel of the Auckland Fish Export Committee and other provincial committees which would set up to deal with and advise upon local matters. The total membership, however, should not be too large. The functions of such a central authority would naturally fall under the headings of:—

- (1) Co-operation with the Government in conserving supplies.
- (2) Co-ordination of the export trade along national lines in lieu of unwarranted competitive marketing.
- (3) Expansion of internal markets, and elimination of unnecessary overlapping in distribution to these markets.
- (4) The absorption of uneconomic units.
- (5) Improvements in the methods of handling, processing, packing, and freezing.
- (6) A reduction in prices where possible.
- (7) Publicity as to the value of fish as a foodstuff.

Recommendations.

New Zealand.

1. That the authority conferred upon the Auckland Fish Export Committee be confirmed and extended to cover supervision, co-ordination, and development of the internal market for fish and fish products within the Auckland Provincial District. This would mean the appointment of one or more representatives of the retail trade to the Committee.

2. That committees to function along parallel lines be set up, one in Wellington (including Napier representation), and one in the South Island with headquarters in Dunedin.

3. That a central authority consisting of representatives from these provincial committees, together with Government appointees, be set up to act as the supervising body for the whole of the export and internal marketing operations of the industry in the Dominion.

Otago.

4. That the present system of sale by auction in Dunedin be abolished.

5. That in lieu thereof a seasonal wholesale price be fixed in conjunction with a fixed price to the fishermen for the different varieties of fish, such prices and the distribution of the fish to be under the control of a central organization.

6. That an advance by way of loan be made to the Port Chalmers Fishermen's Society, Ltd., to enable it to finance the erection of a small plant for the cool storage of bait, the question of a storage place for the society's surplus fish supplies to be held over pending developments in regard to the proposed change-over from auction to direct marketing.

Christchurch.

7. That the present system of sale by auction in Christchurch be abolished.

8. That in lieu thereof a seasonal wholesale price be fixed in conjunction with a fixed price to the fishermen for the different varieties of fish, such prices and the distribution of fish to be arranged through Messrs. P. Feron and Son, Ltd., under the supervision of a Dominion organization.

Nelson.

9. That the price paid to the fishermen for all fish (including crayfish) in Nelson be fixed at agreed-upon rates, payment to be upon a basis of weight.

Napier.

10. That there should be the least possible number of variations in prices over any twelve-monthly period, and, if possible, the returns to the fishermen and the wholesale and retail prices should be standardized for periods of at least three months at a time.

11. That the number of wholesalers be restricted to those at present engaged in the industry.