

PART IV.

HARBOUR FACILITIES.

At all the ports visited the Committee not only questioned witnesses respecting the harbour facilities provided, but as far as time permitted made personal inspections. In many cases the facilities are inadequate to say the least, and remedial action is necessary if the fisheries industry is to be effectively organized. The results of the Committee's investigations follow.

Southland.

Bluff.—The harbour facilities at Bluff appear to be adequate, more especially as no berthage charge is made and the wharfage and water rates appear to be reasonable. The only complaint which could be justified by this Committee was the lack of berthage space for fishing-vessels. This causes overcrowding and consequent damage to the various craft during bad weather. The berthage of the oyster-vessels is satisfactory. We were informed that the question of more accommodation for the fleet is being considered by the Harbour Board, and we hope that it will be able to give the matter favourable consideration. It was brought to our notice that the length of the approach to the new oyster-wharf was so great that motor haulage to the railway was necessary, which involved an increase in costs, but the position of the oyster-wharf in relation to the depth of water and the necessity of having it removed from any source of contamination are matters for the Harbour Board and the Health Department to decide. Any complaints by the people concerned should have been made to the bodies when the erection of the wharf on the new site was under discussion.

Waikawa.—The fishermen here are very badly served with accommodation, and a new wharf and some type of slipway is urgently required. Some repairs to the wharf-shed were also requested, but this shed is already in the charge of a local committee. Since the Sea Fisheries Investigation Committee sat at Waikawa the question of repairs to the shed has been settled, the Marine Department having provided the material at a cost of £45 and the men to do the work. A good case was made for the provision of a wharf or landing-jetty and for some means of slipping the fishing-vessels for repairs or maintenance.

Stewart Island (Half-moon Bay).—The facilities here are adequate and no complaints were received.

Otago and South Canterbury.

Moeraki.—The men here are fairly well satisfied with the facilities provided, and these appear to be adequate.

Taieri Mouth.—A slipway is urgently required at this port. At present the boats have to go to Port Chalmers, which is not only costly but dangerous if the vessels have been damaged while crossing the bar. The formation of the foreshore here makes it impossible for the men to beach their boats for copper painting. A suitable slipway could be erected for approximately £250. The maximum lift would be about 12 tons.

Port Chalmers.—The harbour facilities provided at Port Chalmers are good, the system of unloading fish by means of an elevator being the best in New Zealand.

Oamaru.—The harbour facilities provided at Oamaru are probably the worst in New Zealand. Inspection showed that the fishermen have ample ground for complaint. The landing-ramp up which the men have to carry the heavy fish-cases is in bad repair and men have suffered injury through slipping on it. The slipway is not satisfactory, being out of date and fitted with a crude cradle. It is not workable if any surge is running.

Timaru.—The harbour facilities here are quite good, with the exception of the slipway. This is in a bad place and can only be used in fine weather. The present state of the slipway prevents its use for the larger craft, and if it is not put in order vessels over 35 ft. in length may have to go to Port Chalmers.

All the fishermen stressed the necessity for some sort of fog-signal at the entrance, either a bell-buoy, whistling-buoy, or fog-horn on the Eastern extension.

Canterbury.

Lyttelton.—The facilities provided for the steam trawlers are adequate, and the Harbour Board charges and Borough Council water rates are reasonable. The accommodation for the small boats does, however, call for some comment. Taking the boats size for size, the fishermen have to pay the same mooring fees as the private yachtsmen. The yachtsmen are provided with mooring-piles and ample space so that their vessels may be left in all weathers without risk of damage through bumping, but the fisherman has to be content with a mooring-ring on the breastwork for his stern line and has to provide his own mooring forward. The lateral space allowed to each boat is insufficient and much damage is suffered through the vessels bumping in bad weather. Further, there is no provision to enable the men to hoist the fish from their boats to the wharf at low water. At one end of the breastwork there is a large crane, but it is too heavy for the job even if it were available,