

New Plymouth.

All of the witnesses in New Plymouth complained of the lack of harbour facilities. The men are quite willing to pay the usual small annual fee if proper accommodation is provided, but the Harbour Board apparently will not move in the matter. No mooring or berthage fees are charged, some of the boats being berthed at the wharf and others moored in the harbour. Water-supplies have to be carried 100 yards to the boats, and the facilities for landing fish are inadequate. It was suggested that facilities akin to those at Picton—*i.e.*, a staging under the wharf, and a crane—would meet requirements.

Another source of complaint was that there is no slip available. When boats need overhauling or repair the fishermen have to get them lifted on to the wharf, for which the cost is £3 for the lift and 5s. per day after four days on the wharf. The men would be willing to pay £1 per time for the use of a slip if one were provided either by the Board or the Government. The estimated annual revenue is £40.

One very important matter brought up was the necessity for the provision of permanent leading-lights at Kawhia, some eighty to ninety miles up the coast. This is the only port at which the New Plymouth men can get shelter if bad weather comes on when they are on the fishing-grounds. At present the leading-light at Kawhia is only put up by special arrangement. Obviously it is impossible for the fishermen at sea to make this arrangement, and as the bar cannot be crossed at night unless the lights are lit they have to wait till daybreak, by which time the bar may be unworkable. It was stated that if there had been permanent lights at Kawhia the last fishing-vessel that was lost would probably have been saved, because the men could have run for shelter.

A light on the North Wall at Waitara was also requested to assist the fishermen over the bar at night-time. The Committee considers that both these requests for lights are reasonable, and that the erection of the lights would give the men greater security and would assist in the saving of life.

Wellington (Island Bay).

At Island Bay, where the majority of the line-fishing vessels land their catches, facilities are non-existent if one excludes what Nature has provided. There is no jetty, no slip, and no provision for the storage of small boats and fishing-gear. The provision of suitable facilities at the Bay has been a subject of discussion for many years, and at no other port has there been so determined an effort to oust the fishermen from their natural rights. If there have been complaints about the insanitary state of the beach and its surroundings due to bait-boxes, &c., they can all be traced to this lack of provision of facilities.

The Committee made an inspection of the position, and favours the erection of the necessary facilities on the eastern rocks, as was recommended by the Commission which reported to the Wellington City Council in September, 1929.

In 1934 the Wellington City Empowering Act was passed. The purpose of this legislation was to authorize the City Council to lease portion of a recreation reserve at Island Bay to the fishermen. Taking into account the cost of erecting at the site suggested, proper accommodation in the way of a wharf, slipway, sheds, freezer, and approach, the term of the lease, twenty-one years, was so short as to afford no adequate security for the investment of the money required. In addition to the short term of the lease as noted in the Act, the fishermen were informed that there would be no right of renewal and no compensation or right of removal of improvements. This has produced an undesirable condition of stalemate. Until adequate facilities are provided there will be recurring friction at this point. We consider that, with the provision of adequate facilities, the present nuisance will disappear. We are of the opinion that the wharf, if possible, should extend far enough seaward to admit the berthage of vessels up to 80 ft. or 90 ft. in length at all stages of the tide, because the ever-increasing distance which the vessels will have to steam to the fishing-grounds will necessitate the construction of larger vessels than those in the present fleet.

Recommendations.*Waikawa.*

1. That the Government give favourable consideration to the application of the Waikawa men for a modified wharf or jetty and for reasonable facilities for the slipping of their vessels.

Taieri Mouth.

2. That the fishermen at Taieri Mouth be assisted with the erection of a slip costing not more than £250.

Oamaru.

3. That the Government approach the Oamaru Harbour Board with regard to the provision of (a) a suitable slip, and (b) the provision of a suitable jetty to enable the men to land their fish in safety.

Timaru.

4. That the Government approach the Timaru Harbour Board with regard to the provision of a suitable slip in a situation where it can be used in all weathers.
5. That the Government or the Timaru Harbour Board erect a suitable fog-signal at the entrance to the port.