

A. Hull, Moeraki.—This is a small privately owned unit which is not operated to capacity, as many of the fishing-boats here are now sending their fish to Dunedin for the National Mortgage and Agency Co.

North Otago Cool Stores, Ltd., Oamaru.—This is a small unit available to the trade generally, but the freezing of fish is only a side line.

P. Feron and Son, Ltd., Timaru.—This is a pre-cooling unit. The freezing-chamber requires overhaul, particularly the old wooden floor, which should be replaced if the plant is to continue handling fish.

Of the above units, only that operated by the National Mortgage and Agency Co., Ltd., is really up to date and fitted for its work. Some of the others are quite unsuitable for freezing fish and of doubtful utility even for chilling. The use of wooden floors in freezers which receive wet fish is to be strongly condemned, because after a period of years the floor becomes saturated with fish slime. Where these wooden floors exist, the firms should be compelled to replace them with concrete floors.

In addition to these units, there is the freezer at Port Chalmers owned by Thomas Anderson, Ltd. This plant has passed through several hands since its erection and is at present closed. Certain suggestions were made to the Committee whereby the plant could be reopened, but as the title is involved with mortgages and various other instruments, and the building encroaches on the road-line, we are unable to recommend favourable consideration to any project concerning this freezer which involves financial assistance from the Government. Some years ago the Port Chalmers Fishermen's Co-operative Society advanced certain moneys for equipment—unfortunately, without taking due precautions in the way of fixing the security—and its members now favour any measure which will release at least portion of their outlay, but all the suggestions tendered had grave possibilities, and there was no certainty that the control of the premises would remain with the fishermen even if assistance were granted.

Christchurch.

Apart from a large number of small freezers fitted into retail premises, the only space available in Christchurch is the plant of P. Feron and Son, Ltd. Outside Christchurch there are only the pre-cooling plants at Kaikoura and Timaru owned and operated by the same firm. The main plant at Christchurch, though by no means up to date so far as refrigeration is concerned, is suitable for the work which it has to perform when judged by New Zealand standards. Probably owing to the high value of land in this vicinity there appears to be some congestion in the working-space, but it must be borne in mind that the auction-market takes up space which would be utilized for the handling of the local and export fish if this firm did not conduct the auction as well as carry on its own wholesale trade. Details of the plant will be found in Appendix N.

Kaikoura.

At Kaikoura the plant is used purely for the pre-cooling of fish which are to be forwarded to Christchurch. It is out of date and will have to be remodelled if the trade from Kaikoura is to be extended or if the plant is to be brought up to modern standards. When the South Island Main Trunk Railway is completed and in operation there will be little need for this freezer, except perhaps for use as an ice-store. For details, see Appendix N.

Nelson, Picton, and Blenheim.

At Nelson there is only one freezer, and this is used by the owner for the purpose of holding his own supplies. Most of the space is reserved for fruit, only one small chamber being used for fish. As the chamber is actually used only as a cool-room, no details are given. The most interesting feature here was the use of a special deodorizer in the chamber. This special compound appeared to be very efficient.

Satisfactory accommodation is required at Nelson, because at present fish must either be shipped at once to Wellington to take its chance on a market perhaps already glutted by supplies from other ports or be sold to the local merchant at his price if he can store it in the small amount of space which he has available. At each port there should be some arrangement whereby the fishermen can store their fish at a fixed charge without actually having to sell it to the owner of the freezer.

At Picton the only refrigerated space available to the fishermen is that at the local meat-freezing works, and this plant shuts down for about five months in each year. The men are well treated by this company in the matter of charges, but it is essential that the fishermen should have a place to store their fish and bait over the whole year. As several of the local fishermen are men of good standing, it was suggested that a cool store with a storage capacity of 25 tons might be erected on co-operative principles.

No freezing-space is available to the men at Wairau Bar unless they send their fish to the meat-works at Picton, and to do this heavy transport charges are incurred. We are not satisfied that there would be sufficient fish offering to warrant the erection of a freezer at this point.

Napier.

The only refrigerated storage for fish at Napier, exclusive of retail-shops with freezers, is the chilling-accommodation owned and worked by the Napier Fisheries Co-operative, Ltd., at Port Ahuriri. The freezer owned by J. J. Niven and Co., Ltd., is not available for the storage of fish, as one of their main lines is butter, and they fear risking any taint in this commodity. The chill-rooms of the Napier Fisheries Co-operative, Ltd., are used for holding short-term supplies only, and are capable of handling