

of the best and most energetic fishermen, and, this being so, the net earnings of the total full-time fishermen engaged (1,381 during the year ended 31st March, 1937) would on the average fall well below the £199 per annum mentioned. There were also 711 part-time men engaged.

Naturally, the figures vary with each port and even with each fisherman, depending upon the class of fish caught and its price, the type of vessel, and the methods of fishing employed. It is interesting to compare, for instance, Bluff (or Stewart Island) with Auckland, where at the former the average price realized was 2·87d. per pound and at the latter 1·79d. per pound, yet the average earnings are £103 as against £302 per annum. Although it is true that the Stewart Island men do not actually fish all the year round, this shows to what extent the men on the Auckland seine-fishing boats have the advantage over the line-fishermen.

In Auckland representations were submitted to us that under the industrial award (see below) the men, or at least the senior men, on the larger seine boats were earning a share of the proceeds disproportionately large compared with the boat-owner's earnings. This may be true in the case of a number of the larger boats in connection with which the costs of upkeep are heavy, but in view of our recommendations as to the operations of Danish seine boats generally we have no submissions to make in this respect.

Under this heading we give particulars of the industrial awards in force and covering the fishing industry. They are:—

(1) The Northern Industrial District Fishermen—

Upon a basis of 2d. per pound green weight for the main varieties of fish taken (snapper and tarakihi) the minimum wages and shares payable are—

- (a) In vessels of the small class, three shares of one-fifth each.
- (b) In vessels of the intermediate class, three shares of one-sixth each.
- (c) In vessels of the large class: Skipper, two-elevenths shares; mate, two-thirteenths shares; engineer, two-thirteenths shares; fourth hand, for the first 80 baskets (100 lb. each) 1s. per basket, for the next 40 baskets 6d. per basket, for all in excess of 120 baskets 4d. per basket.

NOTE.—The shares are payable upon the return for the total catch after operating-expenses and the wages of the fourth hand are deducted.

(2) The Northern Industrial District Fish Trade Employees:—

Adult workers, £4 10s. per week; smokers—freezing or ice-room hands—£4 15s. 6d. per week.

(3) Wellington Fish-workers:—

Head smoker and curer, £5 5s. per week; experienced general hands, £4 15s. per week; general hands (under two years' experience), £4 5s. per week.

(4) Wellington Trawler Employees:—

Mate, £5 per week plus bonus 1d. per basket; Deck hands, £4 10s. per week plus bonus 1d. per basket; fireman, £5 7s. 6d. per week.

(5) Auckland Trawler Employees.

Same as Wellington Trawler Employees:—

(6) Otago and Southland Oystermen and Cannery-workers:—

Oyster-boat employees, 10d. per sack; master, 10d. per sack plus bonus 2½d. per sack; engineer, 10d. per sack plus bonus 1½d. per sack; baggers and bed-men, £4 15s. per week; oyster-openers, 4s. 6d. per sack.

In all awards the usual provisions are made for the scale of wages payable to youths.

UTILIZATION OF FISH OFFAL AND WASTE FISH.

At the time of our investigation there were only two fish-reduction plants in operation in New Zealand, one at Christchurch and one at Auckland. An attempt was made some years ago to establish a company in Christchurch to deal with the offal and waste fish, but the scheme never reached fruition. Two reasons were given for the non-success of the flotation: (a) That the flotation was attempted during the depression years when it was exceedingly difficult to raise money for any new form of enterprise; (b) the fact that the largest producer of the waste material would not join the company, as they wished to install their own plant.

In most of the ports visited the people concerned were warmly interested in the question of the utilization of fish offal. This interest was particularly keen in Dunedin, where two parties are considering the erection of suitable works. In all the minor ports the amount of offal and waste fish which would be available would not be sufficient to warrant the erection of the elaborate plant necessary, because the material offering could not be treated in an economical manner. The cost of transport, which is high in relation to the value of the finished product, precludes any chance of the offal being brought in from outports to centrally situated works. One aspect worthy of examination would be the erection of drying-plants at certain ports where the amount of offal is high enough to justify this limited activity but not large enough to keep a complete unit in operation. In these cases, with some railage concession on the transport of the partly dried product from the outport to a central works where the process could be completed, there may be some chance of success. Such ventures could only proceed on co-operative lines with a payout of the profits on the basis of raw material supplied. The price realized for the finished article, which in bulk is only some 25 per cent. of the primary product disposes absolutely of the question of payment for the material in the first instance.