

grounds reported to lie off shore must, in part at least, be the responsibility of the Government. If such grounds exist, and the fish are present in payable quantities, then the working of such grounds would relieve the strain on our already depleted inshore grounds.

A survey of the present grounds to establish the fact as to whether they are breeding, nursery, or feeding grounds was asked for in several places. The importance of this work cannot be stressed too highly, as without such knowledge fisheries administration will be largely in the dark as to the proper policy to pursue.

Most of the companies concerned expressed their willingness to co-operate with the Government in surveys and explorations, and their assistance would take the form of making vessels available at a price which would at most only cover the actual working-expenses.

Further knowledge of the habits of the more important species of fish, crustacea, and oysters is also urgently required if we are to make the best use of our resources.

One serious problem referred to elsewhere in this report is that of the gut stain in snapper. This trouble leads to considerable loss in the trade in Auckland and is worthy of special investigation. Several theories are advanced as to its cause, but one most favoured being that this is associated with the feed, but the Committee is of the opinion that, although this might be the primary cause, the holding of the fish for prolonged periods with the gut in is a contributory factor. We therefore recommend that as soon as finances become available and the staff can undertake the work the following research should be undertaken, either in conjunction with or after such special investigations as have been asked for in other portions of the Report.

Recommendations.

New Zealand.

1. That a survey be made of all outlying banks and possible fishing-grounds, the industry to bear portion of the cost.
2. That a survey be made of the present grounds to ascertain their stocks and the type of ground—i.e., breeding, nursery, or feeding ground.
3. That investigations be made into the life-histories of the more important species of fishes, and also crayfish and oysters.

Auckland.

4. That the problem of gut stain in the snapper landed at Auckland be investigated as soon as possible.

FISHERMEN'S RESERVES.

French Pass.

When the Committee sat at French Pass the question of the provision of land for a fishermen's reserve was brought up. In this area the land held is in large blocks and is mainly very steep. There is little flat land except that portion in Elmslie Bay on which stand the local store, post-office, school, and other buildings. A small area of 6 acres at Reynaud Point, about two miles and a half from French Pass Wharf, has been set aside as a Fishermen's reserve—it has sufficient flat land for one house, already erected and occupied. Two young fishermen rent this house from the lessee of the reserve. The rest of the 6 acres is very steep and is not fenced at its boundary with the adjoining property. This reserve is quite unsuitable for the purpose for which it was provided.

The difficulty of arranging for a suitable reserve for the fishermen in this district is intensified by the lack of unoccupied flat land in conjunction with a safe anchorage for the fishing-boats. The Committee inspected one property on Big Flat at Catherine Cove which appeared to be suitable for the purpose. This property of 1,500 acres, of which 60 acres to 80 acres is more or less flat, could by draining be made suitable for the use of the fishermen. In common with all the properties in the neighbourhood, the bulk of the property is steep hillside, only fit for sheep-grazing. It is unfortunate that so large an area of hill country would have to be bought to obtain the flat land, but the owner is not likely to sell the flat land alone, as the other ground would be of little use except to the adjoining landholders. Undoubtedly it is difficult to provide accommodation for the local fishermen, who lack finance of their own, especially when the purchase of the land is so considerable an item, but your Committee is of the opinion that despite this every effort should be made to provide the fishermen with a suitable reserve.

Kaikoura.

The fishermen here complained of the action of the Government in proclaiming certain portions of the Coast Road as scenic reserve and forbidding them to land and squat at any spot which they desire, as has been the custom in the past. This Committee cannot support the men in this matter, but agrees that provision of a suitable reserve for the men should be made. It appears that there is a reserve in existence, the drawback to it being that until the railway-work was put in hand there was no road access. It was stated that when the railway-work is finished this road, a temporary one, would be closed. The Committee was unable to inspect the present reserve.

Taumutu.

Strong representations were made for an improvement in the living-conditions of the fishermen at Taumutu. As they have no tenure of the present site, which is a landing reserve, it was contended that they should get back the 62 acres of Maori commonage. This commonage is really Crown land and is