

purpose can be served by having a separate accountancy staff. It may be that there are practical difficulties in the way of such reorganization, but the Committee considers that it is so necessary for the proper administration of the fisheries as to be entitled to serious consideration.

One further point emphasized by the Chief Inspector of Fisheries in his last annual report is that "the administration by the Marine Department of fisheries is circumscribed by the authority given by the Fisheries Act, and the Department has no interest in fish after it has been brought ashore (except fish that has been taken illegally). In actual fact, however, the conditions under which fish is bought and sold and distributed have a material effect on the fishermen's operations. The problems, but not necessarily the administration, of distribution cannot be dissociated from the problem of production, and nowhere does this appear more forcibly than in connection with the fisheries of Auckland, where competition for markets, especially the export markets, has led to an increase of the catching-power with a consequent rise in the cost of production and an intensification of the normal tendency on the part of the merchant to pay as little as possible to the fishermen for the fruits of their labour. The lower the price the fishermen gets for his fish, the more fish he has to catch to enable him to make a living, and the effect of this in Auckland was to accelerate the depletion on the overworked fishery grounds, to drive the fishing-boats to more distant fishing-grounds, and to give rise to complaints from the local fishermen and settlers in the distant coastal districts that the operations of the Auckland vessels were depleting these grounds."

The administration of any marketing policy has always been vested in the Industries and Commerce Department constituted under the Board of Trade Act. In the past the great weakness has been that there has been no co-operation between the two Departments—the Marine Department, on the one hand, charged with the administration of problems connected with supply and production, and, on the other hand, the Industries and Commerce Department, charged with the work in connection with distribution and marketing. Within the last year or two the Departments have been working much more closely together, and this co-operation should be fostered and expanded in every way. It would not be advisable to pass over the administration of the marketing problems to the Marine Department, seeing that the Industries and Commerce Department has a specially trained staff to deal with these matters, including officers stationed in those countries which form our export markets. Our detailed recommendations with regard to distribution and marketing appear under another section of this report. The Fisheries Act itself requires to be rewritten, as many of its provisions are inadequate for present-day conditions. The present Act, passed in 1908, is really only a consolidation of a series of Acts and amendments passed between 1867 and 1907. There have been short amendments in 1908, 1912, 1914, 1923, and 1926, the last referring only to Fresh-water Fisheries. Conditions in the industry and fishing methods and administration have changed so completely since the Act was written that a great deal of the text has no application whatever to present conditions, and there are many weaknesses in the balance of the Act which hinder administration. We suggest that the Hon. the Minister of Marine should instruct his officers to submit a detailed report on the Act as it stands at present. After the Government has decided its policy with regard to our recommendations, the regulations made under the Fisheries Act should be consolidated. This was last done in 1932, and there have been so many amendments in the meantime that difficulty in following the legislation has been experienced.

Recommendations.

1. That a reorganization of the Fisheries Branch of the Marine Department be carried out, with the aim of making it a separate unit responsible to the Marine Department only for accounts and discipline.
2. That the collection and compilation of fishery statistics be treated as a matter of urgency, and that every effort be made to attain the standards of other maritime countries as soon as possible.
3. That a movement for the education of the fishermen in matters concerning the administration of the fisheries, the value of conservation, and other matters of importance be undertaken and become a duty of the Fisheries Branch.
4. That the expansion of the Department's research activities be proceeded with as soon as the staff, equipment, and finances become available.
5. That the Inspectorate be strengthened by the appointment of full-time, part-time, and honorary Inspectors in those places where it is inadequate at present. The provision of an Inspector and launch for the Bay of Plenty is the most urgent requirement.
6. That the present co-ordination between the Marine Department and Industries and Commerce Department be fostered and expanded where possible.
7. That the Fisheries Act of 1908 and its amendments be rewritten to bring it up to date and to remove the anomalies and weaknesses which exist in the present legislation.
8. That, as soon as the Government has dealt with our recommendations on production, the Fisheries Regulations of 1932 and the additions and amendments thereto be consolidated. When this work is done, one copy should be issued gratis to the master of every licensed fishing-boat and to each new licensee.

CONCLUSION.

All our recommendations hereinbefore set out are marshalled on the following pages.

The Committee wishes to place on record its appreciation of the capable and conscientious assistance rendered by Miss O. B. Clist and Mr. Allan Sutherland (reporters) and Mr. D. A. Johnston, Secretary. It would not have been possible to secure a more efficient staff.

Dated this 24th day of December, 1937.

JAMES THORN, M.P., Chairman.
M. W. YOUNG, Member.
E. SHEED, Member.