

our waters. Now, Sir, I would like to draw the attention a grant in the last session of £300 for the protection of oysters and fish. I would ask whether this will apply to Canterbury, where the fish is smuggled into our cases when put up for sale, where we find them, and for protecting myself and others, we are continually being robbed in the way fish is sold at the railway by these men appointed by the fishermen. Now, Sir, I would like to draw your attention to the Fish Auction 1886, which has been violated, which says, newly-caught fish shall be sold by auction, but not shell-fish. Smoke-fish, and other things has been sold at this fish sale, where, Sir, I have been deprived of getting a living for my wife and family through the action I have taken, conjointly with Mr. Farr, secretary to the acclimatisation society, while assisting to bring these men to justice for the greed of their pockets. They would exterminate our fishery if it lied in their power. Now, Sir, through my actions I have had to pay both by my pocket and mind. My sufferings has been black-mailed and robbed, and brutally assaulted by men calling themselves fishmongers, who are a disgrace to the Fishmongers' Company of the City of London, that my parents had the honour to belong. Now, Sir, if I can succeed in making a better state of things to come about with the one object will be completed, which means a living for the poor man, as well as those oyster-saloons, who have got rich on that which belongs to one and all, which has brought out a heavy expense to the country, and who have prospered for a lot of years at the expense of the New Zealand Government, which I think that the last conviction of a fine of £20 for selling trout out of season is evident of what has been carried on for years.

GEO. TIBBS, Fishmonger.

Mr. M. HART to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

204, Hereford Street, Christchurch, 14th October, 1890.

I am instructed by Mr. George Tibbs, fishmonger of this city, to bring under the notice of the Government the necessity of some amendments to the regulations under "The Fisheries Conservation Act, 1884," being at once made and gazetted in order to save the wholesale destruction of the flounder that is now being carried on. I understand the regulations now in force are to be found in *New Zealand Gazette* of the 2nd April, 1885. The 10th regulation prescribes the size of the mesh to be not less than 2½ in. The consequence is that small flounders are taken, and when the nets are emptied into the water, or drawn, flounders of very much less than the prescribed length are killed and sometimes taken. Mr. Tibbs was himself convicted and fined £5, as were many others, for having these fish in possession; while, to mark the absurdity of the thing, at the last conviction for this in Lyttelton the two defendants were fined 1s. each. What is wanted, it appears, is an increase of the size of the mesh in order to enable the small flounders to escape and thrive.

In *Gazette* No. 51, of the 25th September last, the regulation for netting trout (lake trout) prescribe a 4 in. mesh. It is suggested that a 4½ in. mesh applicable to flounders will carry out the spirit and meaning of the Act. As it is, there is no doubt a very evident decadence of the flounder, and it behoves the Government to conserve this most valuable fish. May I therefore respectfully inquire if you will at once cause the requisite inquiries to be made with a view to the doing-away of the evil referred to. If I can in any way be useful in bringing about such a desirable state of things I shall be most happy.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

MAURICE HART.

Mr. M. HART to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

DEAR SIR,—

204, Hereford Street, Christchurch, 19th November, 1890.

Some three or four weeks ago I wrote to your department, calling attention to use of such a small mesh as to endanger the increase of flounder, thereby causing the destruction of fish. May I ask if I may be favoured with a reply to my letter, as just now the matter is arousing public attention.

Yours, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington,

MAURICE HART.

DESTRUCTION OF FLOUNDERS. (Extract from the *Press*.)

A CORRESPONDENT some few days ago complained that a large number of undersized flounders were being caught in Lake Ellesmere, and asked for information as to what market they were consigned. We now learn that on Monday last a quantity of small fish were exposed for sale in Rangiora, and the inference is that all fish under the regulation size are disposed of in the country districts, where the chance of detection by the authorities is reduced to a minimum. This reckless taking of small fish will in a short time have the effect of reducing the supply to such an extent that flounders will hardly be obtainable except at an exorbitant cost. If this is the aim of those who are following this practice their hopes will be speedily realised. Fortunately for the people, provision is made by law for the conservation of our fish-supply, and if the regulations are set at defiance by those who seek to make a profit by such means, then we say it must be owing to the negligence of those whose duty it is to see the law enforced. We cannot for a moment think those who take undersized fish are ignorant of the law on the matter. On the contrary, they are well versed in its provisions, and they carry on their illegal traffic with their eyes open, and with a full knowledge of the consequence if they are detected. But it appears that there is little fear of that in the country district, and the disposal of small fish is allowed to be carried on undisturbed.

For the information of those who may plead ignorance, we quote the following regulation, issued by His Excellency the Governor, under the provisions of "The Fisheries Conservation Act, 1884:—" "No person shall take, buy, sell, expose for sale, or have in possession any fish of any species enumerated in the schedule hereto of a less weight or size than that set opposite the name of such fish, and if any such fish of a less weight or size than therein mentioned shall be taken by any person within any fishery affected by this regulation the same shall forthwith be returned alive to the water." The minimum size set down for flounders is 9 in., and yet we are informed they are frequently exposed for sale at 6½ or 7 in. The mesh of the net to be used in Lake Ellesmere is fixed at 4½ in., so that all fish under 9 in. in length can pass through.