

Ellesmere. No doubt a large number of flounders go to sea when the lake is open, but these probably die, as they could not live on the shingle. They would not return to the lake. All that go out are mere waste. These Lake Ellesmere flounders are not sexually mature until they attain about 12in. in length. It seems to be necessary, therefore, to retain some fish of this size in the lake, and I would suggest whether some part of the lake could not be reserved, and not allowed to be fished at all; there would then be always some supply. The question of the size of the flounder to be taken seems to be quite separate from the question of extinction. The length of the flounder is about twice its breadth, so that a 4in. mesh would take every flounder over 8in., and would also take a number of smaller ones which would become entangled. I do not think the size of mesh should be less than 5in., as this would take every 10in. fish. The great thing to guard against is the killing of fish which are too small to be sold, and I would advocate a 5in. mesh to prevent the waste of small fish. If the mesh is such that it takes every fish of legal size, there must be a number killed under the legal size. I think it would even be better to have a larger mesh, and allow them to sell all they catch; so that 5in. is the very least that should be allowed. I think that places reserved, and not allowed to be fished at all, would be better than a close season for flounders.

*Rev. A. Chodowski* (Jewish minister, Christchurch): My congregation use much fish. The flounders brought to my house for sale are very small, and I consider them unwholesome, and not nutritious or fit for food. In my opinion, the sale of flounders 9in. and less in length should be prohibited, for the following reasons: First, in my opinion, this species of fish, though when sufficiently developed, a very nutritious and edible fish, eaten so small is unwholesome; secondly, if taken under 9in. must necessarily prevent their natural and sufficient increase. Flounders are often brought to my house of very small size by some of the hawkers, as small as 3in., 4in., or 5in. long; these are ill-flavoured and immature. I think 9in. the very least size that should be allowed. I have seen very small flounders brought round and sold at twelve or fifteen for 1s.; these would be 3in., 4in., or 5in. long.

*Joseph Germano* (fishmonger, Christchurch): I am a fishmonger, and have been in Christchurch in business for about fourteen or fifteen years. I am of opinion that 9in. is too small to allow flounders to be taken. In my opinion, they ought not to be taken under 11in., and the mesh not less than 5in. or 5½in. I go and buy my flounders at the auction, and in the six months in the summer they go at about 11s. or 12s. a case, and in the winter £1. The general size of flounders from Lake Ellesmere is about 10in. to 10½in. I think a minimum of 11in. would be fair to all persons, both consumers and fishermen. I do not think a 9in. fish is mature, but is too young to breed. Most of the flounders brought into the market come from Lake Ellesmere. Only a few flounders are obtained from the sea during the summer months. The best-flavoured flounders are from the sea, but the black flounders from Lake Ellesmere are better even than those from the sea.

#### LEESTON, 8TH MARCH, 1893.

*Nicholas Bassi* (fisherman, Lake Ellesmere): I have been fishing on the lake twelve years. My experience of the lake is that I could not get enough flounders to make a living out of it if the size at which they may be taken is made greater than 9in. I get smaller flounders now than I used to two or three years ago. I account for this—(1) on account of the lake being opened more often than formerly; (2) through not trying to catch the larger fish. I reckon that I get about five or six dozen every day all the year round. They run in size from 9in. to 13in. or 14in. Two-thirds of these would be from 10in. to 11in., and the rest larger. I do not belong to the Fishermen's Union, and I take my own means of selling and distributing the fish. At the present time they are more plentiful than they have been for the last three years, and I attribute that to the fact of the lake having been let out only once a year for the last two years, whereas it used to be let out twice a year. The best spawning-ground is down near the mouth; and I suggest that this part of the lake should be protected, especially about October, when the fish are spawning. I consider May and June to be the best months for letting out the lake. The passage from the lake to the sea was open during the last two years for a period of only about four weeks each year. In 1892 it was opened in June and blocked in July, and in 1891 it was opened in August and blocked again the same month. When the lake was not let out for the purpose of the Little River Railway there was a more plentiful supply of flounders than now. The oftener the lake is let out the worse it is for the fishermen. In my opinion, any net below 4½in. takes flounders that are too small. A 4½in. mesh would take a few flounders of 9in., but the majority of them would be 10in. or 11in. If a 5in. mesh were used, in twelve dozen flounders, perhaps a dozen would be 10in. and the remainder 11in. or 12in. A 5in. mesh would let all the 9in. flounders through. I use none less than 4½in. and up to 6in. I have twenty-two nets, fourteen of 90 fathoms each, 4½in. mesh, and eight nets 6in. mesh, of 80 fathoms each. With these nets I do not take more than an average of five dozen flounders per day, taking all the year round. A net 90 fathoms long costs £1 10s., ready to use. The nets last me, as a rule, about eighteen months. In my opinion, drift-nets ought not to be used because they destroy the spawn and young fish. I do not sell my fish by the case but by the dozen, and they average to me about 2s. per dozen, taking all the year round.

#### 9TH MARCH, 1893.

*D. Macmillan*: I am Chairman of the Selwyn County Council. I have been well acquainted with Lake Ellesmere from 1863 to 1868, and again during the last six years. When I was living near the lake, in 1863 and subsequent years, we were supplied by the Maoris with flounders both of better quality and larger than they are now. About one-quarter of the flounders caught years ago would be black flounders. There were no professional fishermen there then. I attribute the small size of the flounders now to excessive fishing. I think no flounders ought to be taken under 10in., nor ought any net to be used that would take flounders of a less size than 10in. Years ago the lake was not let out so frequently as it is now. The flounders were caught both with nets and at