

Mr. Ayson : I am speaking of the Pegasus Fishing Company.

Mr. Crocket : The Bluff people are paying considerably more than the Pegasus people are. Mr. Bragg, speaking of certain fishermen bringing in certain catches from round about the island, mentioned two men in a boat bringing in 1,000 lb. one day, and he mentioned two or three other instances. I would like to ask Mr. Bragg if he saw those fish.

Mr. Bragg : No, I did not see them.

HENRY HANSEN, Fisherman, Stewart Island.

I have been fishing eighteen years, with only three years out of that away altogether. This last year I went out in the boat myself and got 4 cwt. of cod in one day for myself, and I do not think I have ever done that before all the years I have been fishing, and that was got off the north of Half-moon Bay. The fish can be got just as big out of Half-moon Bay as ten years ago, and you can go to the scrap-paddock and get the small ones. They have their different banks. The small fish have a bank and the big fish have a bank. At one time I used to have to go away and stay away all night to try and get fish, but I found I could do just as well out of Half-moon Bay, and be home every night. Since the small-fish racket came in I have only had about six cases of fish, and I have been out every month till the end of August. If it had not been for a few groper I would not have been able to make a living at all.

1. *Mr. McClure*.] You say that you catch as many fish now as you did when you commenced fishing?—Yes, sir.

2. When you commenced fishing, I suppose it was all sail and no oil, or is it all sail now?—No, sir. We had crafts then with sails which could sail just as quickly as these with oil-engines. If the tide did not suit we were quite as well off with a sailing-vessel as with oil-engines. My father had three sons of us, and if we got twenty or thirty dozen we thought we did well then; but now this last two years if we get two days out in the week, we have a show of getting £2 for them for the few months since the new regulations came in.

3. *Mr. Ayson*.] You are speaking now since the size-limit of cod reigned. You say, "this last few years since these rates came in"?—Last few months.

4. "Last few months." You say the fish off Half-moon Bay are as large now?—In certain patches.

5. When you were fishing at first were the fish any larger average size than now?—We had to go for them.

6. You went for larger fish?—We had to.

7. The fact of the fish being paid for by weight, has that had the effect of more small fish being brought in, do you think?—No, there are more fishermen now than there used to be.

8. And larger boats?—No; faster launches.

9. You can depend on getting out and—?—If the weather is suitable; but paying 15s. a case for benzene a month or two back we had to get something to pay for it, for very few boats can go out under a tin of oil for the day.

10. Would you say that the average size of the fish now—would you say that there is any larger percentage of fish caught now than when you commenced fishing first?—Yes, there are more small fish caught now through more boats trying to make a living at it.

11. But percentage?—No. I think, taking the boats right round the island, the percentage would be the same—taking the islands as a whole.

12. Going back to the old fishing-grounds: do you think there is a larger percentage of fish taken off these grounds than there was?—No. The old grounds were not so big as now. There are dozens of new grounds that we never knew of before.

13. I am referring principally to the grounds off Half-moon Bay and Paterson Inlet?—We very seldom go near them.

14. The grounds that they fished, say, fifteen or sixteen years ago?—There are hardly any fish left on them.

15. You say very few fish are left on these new grounds?—As Mr. Traill said, they have a sort of paddock and shift round themselves.

16. I understand you to say that for fifteen years there have not been so many fish on these grounds: Bench Island Bay and Half-moon Bay?—You would not get them on the same spot, but perhaps half a mile further round you would get them.

ALFRED HANSEN, Fisherman, Half-moon Bay.

I have been fishing for eighteen years last January. I do not see any difference in the fishing to-day from what it was when I started. The biggest haul of fish that I have had for the eighteen years has been this year. I have generally got a big lot of fish around the west part of Stewart Island when we got a chance to go there; but in Half-moon Bay I could never have got a living, for we just get a couple of days now and again; you may only get around the island about twice a month, and perhaps you may not get around there once in a month; and if you did not have the fishing-grounds outside of Half-moon Bay to go to when there is westerly weather you could not make a living at all. I suppose the small fish will affect me as little as anybody on Stewart Island, principally from going away from home, but it is impossible to make a living without fishing out of Half-moon Bay when the weather does not suit to get further round.

1. *Mr. McClure*.] That means that you must be continuously fishing—that you cannot catch enough during the good weather?—To fish around the west coast of the islands you have to have fine