

6. *Mr. Ayson.*] You ship cod to Melbourne: do you ship to Sydney as well, Mr. Sullivan?—No, sir.

7. Do you ship them in the same cases as they come from Stewart Island in?—Just exactly the same cases.

8. Is there any limit in Melbourne that the merchants specify?—They have never objected to taking small ones so far.

9. They take any size in the case: they do not object to small ones?—Not at all. It is only locally the objection is raised.

10. Supposing Mr. Pasco employs me to go and fish for him at Stewart Island, and he says to me that he will not pay me for any fish under the $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. weight: do you think that I could compel him to pay me for fish under the $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. weight?—I do not think so. I think the fishermen are not to blame, and I do not think that because perhaps one or two fishermen have abused this thing that all the rest should suffer for that. I think it rests with the merchants. If they do not want anything under $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. they should tell their fishermen, and I am perfectly sure that no fisherman would send them. I would like to call your attention to the fact that we do not see these cases.

11. *Mr. McClure.*] You say you do not see the fish, Mr. Sullivan?—No, sir.

12. There is a statement here about the amount of fish exported, and it runs into 2,304 cases in one year. It seems to me a tremendous amount of fish. Could there not be some supervision by the merchants to see that they were paying for what they were supposed to be getting—only marketable fish?—The only thing is to trust to the men being honest.

13. You are altogether in the hands of the fisherman?—Yes, sir.

Mr. Roderique: I may state that at Stewart Island the fish do not come from any particular part—if they did it would be a different thing.

Mr. McClure: Is it not a fact that each fishing-boat marks its cases?

Mr. Sullivan: Some of them do.

Mr. Crocket: I would just like to say that, speaking for myself and I think the rest of the fish-merchants, they would be quite agreeable to have a limit of 11 oz. cod.

Mr. McClure: Green?

Mr. Crocket: Green, or 8 oz. cleaned and headed. So far as we are concerned, it is a matter of indifference as to whether the limit is to be made in weight or length.

Mr. McClure: I think the majority of the fishermen favour length.

Mr. Crocket: I think so. That is a matter of indifference to us.

Mr. McClure: What weight of green fish, pulled out of the water?

Mr. Crocket: Eleven ounces.

Mr. Ayson: That would mean an 11 in. or 12 in. fish in length?

Mr. Crocket: About that. I might state, Mr. Chairman, that the reason we support the alterations and ask for some protection from the Government is that for the past few years a very great number of fish have been packed in cases, fish considerably under 8 oz. in weight—that was the old regulation, 8 oz., I understand, green. It is quite a common occurrence to get fish 4 oz. and upwards. Now, I want you to understand, sir, that though it seems a very easy matter that we should supervise these fish, it is an extremely difficult matter to do. In fine weather when the boats are out fishing the fish comes in in very large quantities, and it is practically a matter of impossibility for us to examine the fish that comes in to the Bluff. It is nothing for three hundred cases to come in every two days from Stewart Island. Then, apart from that, we are receiving fish from Riverton and from the grounds round Ruapuke Island, and it is all rush, our business—it is either you are doing nothing or you are doing a lot, and we have absolutely no chance of supervising the fish. What I consider is the duty of the Government is to protect the fisheries in some way by appointing an inspector or some one to inspect the fish occasionally at Stewart Island and at all the fishing-ports.

Mr. McClure: It means that you want an inspector. You have made a statement that it is impossible for the fish-merchants to supervise all the fish, and then you calmly state that you want the Government to appoint an inspector. Do you think it is possible for the Government to find men that you cannot find?

Mr. Crocket: You do not quite grasp what I mean.

Mr. McClure: Yes, I thoroughly understand what you say. You say that the fish-merchants are unable to supervise those fish. You made the statement that there are three hundred cases a day coming in, and in the hurry and bustle it is quite impossible to see what size or weight the fish are, and then you calmly turn round and say the Government should appoint an inspector.

Mr. Crocket: Well, I will tell you what the Government should do. They should send an inspector occasionally to visit the various boats as they come in. I do not expect the Government to keep a paid man there to go and inspect every boat that comes in, but I certainly think that the Government should send a man occasionally and make an example of one or two fishermen who are sending in small fish, and it would settle the matter in three months.

Mr. Traill: Mr. Crocket, have you or your fellow fish-merchants made any attempt in the last few years to check the supply of fish—the supply of underweight fish?

Mr. Crocket: Well, the fishermen have been spoken to by the merchants at various times, but the fish have never been inspected.

Mr. Traill: You wish the Government to make a surprise visit of some sort and open the cases at random. Have you ever tried that sort of thing?

Mr. Crocket: Certainly, on many occasions.