

SESSION II.
1912.
NEW ZEALAND.

BLUE-COD COMMISSION

(REPORT OF THE), HELD AT BLUFF ON FRIDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 1912; TOGETHER WITH
MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Laid on the Table by Leave of the House.

REPORT.

SIR,—

Wellington, 10th October, 1912.

We have the honour to report that at the inquiry directed by the Hon. the Minister of Marine in regard to the weight at which blue-cod may be taken, and held before us at Bluff on the 27th September, 1912, there was a representative attendance of fishermen from Half-moon Bay, Stewart Island, and Riverton, and of the retail and export fish-merchants.

The fishermen were represented by Messrs. Traill, Robertson, Jensen, H. and A. Hansen, and T. Bragg, from Half-moon Bay, and W. Stirling, of Riverton; and the merchants by Messrs. Pasco and Sullivan, Invercargill, and Crocket, Bluff.

Exhaustive evidence was given by both the fishermen and merchants. The evidence of the fishermen may be summed up as follows:—

(1.) That the blue-cod fishing-grounds off Half-moon Bay and in Foveaux Strait are not depleted to any extent, and can still be profitably fished.

(2.) That a close season is not required, as the taking of blue-cod practically ceases about the end of August, when the fish will not bite, and they disappear evidently for the purpose of spawning.

(3.) That only a small proportion of the undersized fish that are caught live when they are returned to the sea, owing to the injuries they receive in being unhooked.

(4.) That, allowing for weather-conditions affecting the fishing this season, fishermen have suffered considerable loss through the size-limit of blue-cod having been raised to 16 oz.

(5.) That blue-cod from 8 oz. to 16 oz. in weight are marketable fish.

(6.) That there is necessity for protecting the small fish, and that a size-limit at which they may be taken is necessary. Both fishermen and merchants consider a length-limit, owing to its adaptability, is preferable to a weight-limit; and both agree that if a regulation were passed fixing a limit at 10½ in. in length in the green or natural state, or 9 in. when headed, it would meet the requirements of the industry.

After carefully considering the evidence which was given, we have to recommend that the regulation gazetted on the 14th March, 1912, fixing the size-limit for blue-cod at 16 oz. should be revoked, and an amending regulation brought into force fixing the size-limit at which these fish may be taken or sold at not less than 10½ in. in length in the green or natural state, or 9 in. in length when headed properly—that is, the head cut off at the back of the eyes.

We have, &c.,
G. H. E. McCLURE.
L. F. AYSON.

The Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

Wellington, 11th October, 1912.

With regard to the condition of the blue-cod fishing-grounds in different parts of the Dominion and the size-limit at which these fish should be allowed to be taken, I have to say that I find it almost impossible to get reliable information from fishermen and others interested in the fishing industry with regard to the actual condition of the fishing-grounds, size of fish obtained, &c., the information being always more or less biased in favour of the interests of the person making them.

As you are aware, for some years past frequent complaints have come in from various parts of the Dominion regarding the decrease in the supply of blue-cod from the fishing-grounds, and also with regard to the decrease in the average size of the fish marketed. You will see by the evidence given by the Stewart Island fishermen that most of them maintain that the old fishing-grounds off Half-moon Bay and some other parts yielded as many fish now as in former years. One witness (H. Hansen), however, admitted on being questioned that "there are hardly any fish on them"; and in this connection Mr. Tothill, one of the shareholders in the Pegasus Fishing Company, Stewart Island, made the statement to me at Invercargill that when the freezing plant was erected at Pegasus (about 1899) all the blue-cod they could handle was caught inside Pegasus Inlet. Now, these grounds have been depleted to such an extent for some years past as not to be worth fishing, and their men now fish the reefs outside out as far as the "Traps," and they find that in order to keep up a supply of fish they require to be continually on the lookout for new fishing-grounds.

All this goes to show the necessity for protecting these fisheries, and, as you will see, the fishermen admitted that some protection was necessary. In order to obtain more definite and reliable information regarding the actual condition of the blue-cod fisheries I purpose, with the permission of the Department, to visit the principal fishing-grounds before March and put in some time with the fishermen at each place. This appears to be the only way to arrive at the real condition of the blue-cod fisheries, and the protection which it is actually necessary to give them.

In the meantime I think it advisable to revoke the regulation gazetted on the 14th March, 1912, and fix a limit as recommended in the report furnished by Mr. McClure and myself.

I have, &c.,

L. F. AYSON,
Chief Inspector of Fisheries.

The Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

BLUFF, FRIDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 1912.

ARTHUR WILLIAM TRAILL, of Half-moon Bay.

Gentlemen,—I would like to mention that I am a resident of nearly forty years' duration in Stewart Island. When a young man I went in for fishing and oystering for several years, and although I have no interest in fishing personally and have no pecuniary stake in the fishery the fishermen asked me to act as their representative, knowing that I take a keen interest in the welfare of the island generally, so I wish to put their case before you for your due consideration. I was in Invercargill about six months ago when the regulations altering the minimum of blue-cod from 8 oz. to 16 oz. were announced in the paper. As soon as I saw this announcement I said, "This is a terrible blow to the fishermen." I went up the street and I met a gentleman, a fish-merchant, and I said to him, "What do you think of this?" and he said, "This is a terrible blow to the fishermen. It is too drastic altogether. I would not have minded 10 oz. to 12 oz., but 16 oz. is too much"; and that is exactly my opinion, and my opinion has never changed during the months since. I would like to draw your attention to the conditions under which the fish are caught at Stewart Island, and I would like to describe the fishing-grounds to a certain extent. I would first like to point out that the fishermen cannot avoid catching cod under the minimum, and the higher the minimum is raised the greater the number of undersized fish caught. Under the conditions in which the fish are caught, the size of the hooks they use, &c., these small fish are unavoidably caught, or at any rate a large number of them, and I would also state emphatically that when caught they are badly if not fatally injured. I will describe for you a day's fishing. It may be the fishermen reach the grounds after having lost several days through bad weather. They reach the ground and they try this place and that place, and they do not get on to the fish because the fish are not always in the same spot. Presently they strike out. I have known boats who got all their catch of fish in perhaps an hour. The fish are caught with lines, and are found in the bottom of the ocean—their home is close to the bottom, for the cod never rise above the bottom. The fishermen jerk the line rapidly as soon as a pull is felt, the line is pulled up very rapidly, and when the fish reach the edge of the boat they are jerked off with a rapid jerk which the fishermen learn after long experience. If the fish do not come off with the jerk the fishermen dash them against the side of the boat. The new regulations say that the fishermen are to carefully select fish of a certain size, and if the fish are too small they must throw them overboard so that they may swim to the bottom and recover. The fishermen maintain that in catching the fish they unavoidably injure them so badly that very few would ever reach the bottom. Not only are they badly injured by the hook that has been jerked through their mouth, breaking their jaws and otherwise injuring them, but there are the natural enemies of the fish—gropers and suchlike fish—that are swimming about under the water and on the top of the water. For the last few years there have been large flocks of mollymauks. In past years they were not in evidence in these waters at all. Mollymauks breed down in the southern islands; they are large birds of the albatross species. A fisherman can hardly put a line with bait on it slowly over the boat's side without these birds seizing hold of the bait. In fact, I have been out fishing myself and caught several blue-cod, and have tried to return them to the water without these birds catching hold of them. Sometimes mollymauks catch hold of a person's finger if held over the side of the boat, so fishermen have great difficulty in returning these fish alive, when not injured by the hook, into the water. So I maintain that a very small proportion of the fish that are caught, even if they escape their natural enemies, reach their natural habitat in the bottom of the ocean. I also maintain that cod from 8 oz. to 10 oz. are good, sound, juicy fish, and not to be objected to for any reason, and I would also like to point out that since these regulations came into force increasing the minimum from 8 oz. to 16 oz. it has been a very great loss to the fishermen engaged in the industry in Stewart Island and elsewhere. To give one short example: I was round at Half-moon Bay on Wednesday and I saw a young fisherman there. I said to him, "You went out fishing this morning?" He said, "Yes, I went out this morning, but I am back again." It was about 12 o'clock. I said, "Could you get any fish?" He said, "Yes; they were biting, but all about a pound weight, so they were no use to me." This man had gone out about eight to ten miles to sea, had been steaming about for hours, and got nothing for his day's work; and if these regulations had not been in force he would have got a fair supply of good medium fish and would have made a small day's wages. That is a simple example, but the loss to the fishermen in the aggregate mounts up very highly. I have here a paper I wish to hand in to the Court—a sworn statement extracted from the books of the captain of the Harbour Board at Stewart Island, who checks the cases exported from month to month for the wharfage dues to the Harbour Board—and I would like to compare the figures last year showing the number of fish that had been exported previous to these new regulations coming into force with the number that have been exported since. For the months of February, March, and April, 1910, there were 2,304 cases exported; in 1911, 2,318 cases; 1912 (this present year), for the first three months of the season there was a great rise—we had 3,102 cases exported. For the second part of the year 1911 we had 2,190 exported; but this year, for the second part—that is, after the month of May, when the new regulations were in force, there was a falling-off, and we had only 1,261, a falling-off of over 900 cases. I

would like you to notice that the first part of this year there was a big increase owing to more boats being working and more boats in the grounds. Since these regulations have been in force there is a falling-off, compared with what we would naturally expect from the increase in the first part of the year, of 1,500 cases. Now, the value of this to the fishermen is something like from £800 to £1,000, so that the fishermen from Half-moon Bay and Stewart Island have lost from £800 to £1,000 owing to these regulations having been enforced, and I think it is no wonder the fishermen have indulged in some very unparliamentary language—no wonder they have been squealing over this business to a certain extent. I beg to hand into the Court this statement, which has been testified and sworn by the Chairman of the County Council and the Secretary. “Stewart Island, 25th September, 1912. Export of blue-cod from Half-moon Bay and Horse-shoe Bay for the months of February, March, and April—1910, 2,304 cases; 1911, 2,318 cases; 1912, 3,102 cases: for the months of June, July, August—1911, 2190 cases; 1912, 1,261 cases (under new regulations). I hereby declare that this is a correct statement of the number of cases of fish on which export dues were charged by the Half-moon Bay and Horse-shoe Bay Harbour Boards for the periods stated.—WALTER ROBERTSON, Secretary.—Witness: John Stirling, J.P.” A number of representatives have been sent over from the island, and they are here prepared to give any information they can as to the actual working of the grounds. There is one point they are very strong upon, and they are prepared to give testimony on this point—that is that the grounds at Stewart Island are not being depleted, and that the fishing-grounds can still be fished to as good advantage as thirty years ago. Before these regulations were brought into force there was a decided increase over previous years, which seems to bear out what they maintain—that the grounds have not been depleted. I think these are all the points I wish to lay before you at present. If there are any other points brought up in opposition to what I said I ask the leader of the Court to refute them if possible, and the other representatives from Stewart Island are here present and are prepared to give their evidence on any points that are necessary.

1. *Mr. Ayson.*] Mr. Traill, you have been in Stewart Island many years?—Nearly forty years.

2. Do you know to your own personal knowledge that the fishing-grounds are as good now as, say, in 1877?—Yes. I have not been fishing in the grounds lately, but I have seen the returns from day to day, and there is hardly a day when the fishermen do not come in and I say, “What sort of a day have you had?” and they say, “We have had quite a good haul to-day and good fish”; and it seems that the returns now are as good as I can remember.

3. Mr. Traill, when you settled in Stewart Island what was the condition of the fishing in Paterson Inlet: was blue-cod very plentiful in Stewart Island?—Yes.

4. Do the fishermen fish Paterson Inlet to any extent now?—Not to any extent now. In Paterson Inlet I fish a great deal myself—in fact, I fish in that inlet a great deal more than any other. I generally choose a fine day and put it in as a sort of holiday to myself, and I fish there and it is rather amusement to me to study the ocean-flow, and therefore I go there, and I maintain that I know a good deal about fishing, and the fishing-grounds are good; but there are certain points in the inlet which if you fish continually you fish out, but in time they recover.

5. They recover?—Yes.

6. Since the new regulations came into force you say there has been a decrease of about nine hundred cases?—Yes.

7. Have the weather-conditions had anything to do in your estimation with the decrease?—Last year the weather has been pretty average.

THOMAS CROCKET, Fish-merchant, Bluff.

Mr. Chairman,—Mr. Traill made the statement about a young fisherman being out from 6 o'clock in the morning and arriving back at 12. Unfortunately, the young fisherman had no luck; he got no fish and came back. Is it not a fact, I would like to ask Mr. Traill, is it not a fact that during the past month certain boats have fished right around Stewart Island—started at Half-moon Bay and gone right around the island—with very little success, and also to the working-grounds, where there are practically no small fish to be caught? Can he explain the reason why these boats went around there and caught so few fish?

Mr. Traill: No, I cannot explain the reason that the boats got so few fish, but this fisherman I refer to said, “We are catching any amount of fish out here, but they are only about 1 lb., so it is not worth while wasting any more time. The point I wish to bring out is that if he had been allowed to catch these fish it would not have been a waste of time.

Mr. Crocket: The point I wish to bring out is this—the fishermen who go there are just as likely to find the fish are not biting as the large boats going round Stewart Island.

Mr. ROBERTSON: I think I can explain Mr. Crocket's question. The fish begin to disappear about July. They begin to get scarce about July.

Mr. Crocket: There is another question I would like to ask Mr. Traill. Is he prepared to substantiate his statement that fish are just as plentiful on the grounds now as they were thirty years ago?

Mr. Traill: I will call upon the representative of the fishermen who have been fishing for the last twenty years to give evidence, and you can hear what they have to say on the matter.

Mr. Ayson: We will take the evidence of the fishermen now.

N. J. JENSEN, Fisherman, Half-moon Bay.

I have been a fisherman on Stewart Island for twenty-two years. I can say without hesitation that this year, before the new regulations came into force, we have got more fish for the time than any previous year, and I also beg to state that at the end of August, or just in the middle of August or

somewhere about that time, the fish begin to leave the islands roundabout Half-moon Bay, and it is hardly worth while after that time for any fisherman to go out and try to earn his living, for he can make very little at it. The fish seem to go away, but about January they come back as thickly as ever round about the islands. I do not think the fishing-grounds are getting depleted, or we would not be able to get the same fish every year round. At the first of the season you go somewhere about the north—that is where you get the fish then—and about a month or two afterwards they seem to go away to the other islands and the fishermen in the boats follow them up, and when it comes to the end of August the fish knock off biting, and of the few you get the majority of them have spawn in them—some of them, at any rate—and I think if anything should be done the fish should be protected when they spawn. Another thing I would like to say is that it is very unfair to the fishermen to make weight regulations, for it is impossible for a fisherman to weigh a live blue-cod when it is twisting and wriggling about all the time, and I think it would be fairer for the fishermen that they should go by measurement, for he can have a mark on the boat, and get an idea of the measurement from that; but you cannot weigh a live blue-cod, for the fish wriggles about and you stand the chance of having your fingers pricked and your hands poisoned, and no fisherman would do it, for it takes too long a time and he stands a chance of getting injured.

1. *Mr. Ayson.*] I would like to ask you, if you say you caught more fish last year than any previous year, did you refer to the individual catch of any boat?—I referred to my own catch.

2. You are referring now to twenty-two years ago?—Twenty-two years ago you could not catch any more fish in a day with your boat than you can now.

3. With the same number of fishermen?—Yes.

4. How many in a boat—two?—Three in a boat.

5. I think you said the fish disappear in the spawning season?—Yes.

6. And you said, or at least I understood you to say, that you thought a close season would be sufficient protection: did I understand you aright?—Yes; I certainly think it is better for the fish, for it stands to reason if you catch fish with the spawn in, look at the number of fish that are getting destroyed, even if over 1 lb.; and I say this without hesitation, that after the end of August there is not a living in it for anybody.

7. Well, then, the cod practically have a close season?—Yes, they close their own season.

8. So it would be quite unnecessary for the Government to close the season?—Yes. There are a few fishermen who get a few cod after the end of August, and some of them—a good many of them—have spawn in them.

9. Would you say that the average size of the fish caught now off Half-moon Bay is as high as it was twenty years ago?—I think so. I think there is no difference. In the olden days we used to sell the fish by the dozens. The large fish we got so-much for and the smaller fish we got less for, and I have always noticed there was a good deal—over one-third—of the fish caught reckoned as small fish.

10. Twenty years ago?—Yes. I would like to say that the reason the small fish are more noticeable just now is because there are more fish caught, and it stands to reason that if there are more fish caught there are more small fish, because in a small quantity of fish you would not notice the small ones, for there are not so many of them.

11. It has been represented to the Department that, say, fifteen or twenty years ago the percentage of small fish which was brought in did not amount to more than about 20 per cent. of the catch; now, within the last few years, it is represented that the percentage of small fish weighing from half a pound to a pound is quite 50 per cent.?—I do not think so. I beg to differ from that.

Mr. Crocket: I would like to ask Mr. Jensen if he is prepared to swear that in his catch for this season the average has been that more than half the fish have weighed over 1 lb.

Mr. Jensen: No, I simply cannot swear to it, because I have not weighed them. You do not expect me to swear to what I do not know. I have not weighed the fish since these regulations came into force. I have knocked off fishing.

Mr. Crocket: I would also like to ask him if he is prepared to swear that his catch is bigger this year than any year?

Mr. Jensen: Yes, I am prepared to swear that for the time I have been fishing before these regulations came into force.

Mr. Crocket: Not for the year?

Mr. Jensen: No; I knocked off fishing since the regulations came into force, for I could not make a living at it, and it was no use going on at a thing I could not make a living at.

THOMAS BRAGG, Fisherman, Half-moon Bay.

I have been fishing for twenty years. This last season has not been the best season that I have ever had, although I have heard several fishermen say it has been their best. I did more fishing this season among the islands near Half-moon Bay than I have done for the previous five years. Previous to those five years I used to fish a good deal at the back of Stewart Island, and, of course, did very well.

1. *Mr. Ayson.*] Excuse me: when you say “the back of Stewart Island,” you mean the north-west side of Stewart Island?—Yes. This last year I noticed that on the grounds I used to fish on when I started I got as many fish on this last season as I got when I started fishing, although I noticed there were more small fish than when I started fishing. I hold with previous speakers that a fisherman cannot make a living with the present regulations in force, but I believe that the old regulations, with nothing under the 8 oz., would meet the case. I believe the fishermen could make a living right enough with the old regulations in force.

2. *Mr. McClure.*] Mr. Bragg, in reference to putting the small fish back, do you think they live?—I have had a little experience. One of the vessels I had had a well for keeping the fish alive. In those days we would try and get the fish off as carefully as we could, but there was always a lot that died in the wells.

3. *Mr. Ayson.*] How long would you keep them in the wells?—Never longer than about a week.

4. You kept them about a week?—Yes; but we had to be very careful to have the vessel lying out in a place where there was a roll, so as to get the circulation of the water. There was always a percentage of the fish that died even in the wells.

5. Would you expect that even if the netted fish had been put in?—The netted fish always lived if you did not overcrowd them in the well.

6. What grounds have you been fishing in principally?—I have fished all round Stewart Island, and from Waipapa through Foveaux Strait, and right round the South Island.

7. Have you been fishing off Half-moon Bay and round there lately?—I have fished all around Stewart Island and right round the south coast of the South Island for the last twenty years, and I have not missed a season.

8. I think you stated that there were as many fish on the grounds you fished this year, but of a smaller average size?—Yes. It may have been in the quantity of fish caught. We get more individually now than when I started fishing. We catch more fish while the season lasts.

9. But they are a smaller average size?—Yes; more small fish in the catch.

10. What percentage of the fish you catch?—I do not know. Some days you get more large fish than small ones: next day more small fish than large ones. There are certain grounds where you get 75 per cent. of small fish and other grounds 75 per cent. of large fish.

11. Would you say there are as many fish on the grounds handy to Half-moon Bay and Paterson's Inlet as there were twenty years ago?—Yes, I think so. When I started fishing, if we got 600 lb. weight in a day (two of us fished) we considered that an extra good day's fishing. Well, last season—this year—I have seen two men come in with 1,000 lb. for the day.

12. Off these old grounds?—Yes. I have seen two men for four days of the week bringing in the smallest catch, say, 700 lb., and the biggest 1,000 lb.: 700 lb., 800 lb., and 1,000 lb. for the four days.

13. Then, in your opinion there has been no decrease in the quantity of blue-cod on any of the fishing-grounds?—I do not say that exactly, but I think the fish shift about. Just like a paddock where you put sheep—they eat that paddock out; and I think the fishing-ground is the same—the fish eat that ground and shift to the next ground.

14. Do you think the size of the hook used has any influence on the size of the fish caught?—No, I do not think so.

15. You can catch small cod with a groper hook?—You might catch one in a day.

16. I have caught a 2 lb. cod on a groper hook?—Well, I have caught a $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. cod on a groper hook for that matter.

17. It has been suggested that the destruction of small fish—*i.e.*, fish, we will say, under $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.—can be prevented to a considerable extent by the size of the hook used. What is your opinion?—No, I do not think the size of the hook would count at all.

18. Have you any recommendations to make further than what you have made with regard to the protection of blue-cod. Do you think they require protecting?—Well, I think the fish should require to be a certain length, for it is very hard to weigh a blue-cod when it is alive. If, say, any fish of anything under 10 in. was let go again, and it had a chance whether it lived or died (of course, we know the best part of them die).

19. Well, if your experience is correct that there is no decrease in the quantity of blue-cod on the old grounds, why is there any necessity for protection?—Well, there is necessity for protection.

20. If it is a fact that the fish are not decreasing on any of the old grounds which have been fished for twenty years, what is the necessity of having any limit?—We do not need any limit, but I understand the Department means to have a limit of some sort, so I think 8 oz. is a fair thing—say, any fish under 10 in.

21. But fish under 8 oz. will be caught?—Yes, fish under 8 oz. will be caught no matter what sort of hook you use.

22. And all the fishermen about Foveaux Strait unhook their fish by jerking them off?—Yes, you have to.

23. But when turning them in the well-boats you unhooked them?—No, we did not unhook them all. In those days we only used the wells in the summer-time. We generally plugged them up for the winter. In the summer we did not catch as large fish—we had to go all round, and, of course, the fishermen were satisfied if they only made half as much as in the winter. It is in the winter that they expect to do well, from February to August. After that they make up their minds that they will not do much, and pick up other jobs.

24. I am given to understand from the shareholders of the Pegasus Company that they insist on all the fish being unhooked?—We know nothing about them.

25. One of the managing directors informed me that they stipulated that all the fish must be unhooked, for the reason that the jerking bruises them?—That may be why all the men are leaving there.

Mr. Ayson: He says they pay them a higher rate than is usually paid for blue-cod.

Mr. Crocket: Mr. Chairman, I wish to contradict that statement. The fish-merchants of Bluff at the present time are paying considerably more than the Pegasus people pay for their fish, and we put no restrictions on regarding unhooking them.

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

easterly weather, and that is a thing we do not get very much of at Stewart Island some months, and then you may have had it good enough, and never have had a chance to get round about. As for the size of the fish, you go on to one ground to-day and you might get a splendid run of good-sized fish, and you go back to-morrow and you might get nearly all small fish on the same plot where you got the big fish the day before, which shows that the fish must shift about. You see that very often out on the middle grounds between Ruapuke and the islands.

2. *Mr. Ayson.*] What size-limit do you think would be fair?—The old regulations.

3. Do you favour a length-limit instead of weight?—It would not make any difference to me—whatever the other people think. The measurement is very much easier than the weight, because we have a mark cut in the rail of the boat 12 in. long, and that goes just about the bare thing for 11 oz. when clean. When you catch a cod he is always wriggling around, and you can tell when he is nearly the size, but you cannot take hold of him and put him on the rail to measure him, so to make sure of him you give him a bash on deck, and when he is nice and safe, if you are doubtful, you measure him, and if not long enough you let him drop gently over the side.

4. *Mr. McClure.*] He will not recover then?—No, for any cod that is nowhere near the size you make sure of him.

5. *Mr. Ayson.*] If you make any doubt of it?—Yes. If in doubt give him a gentle tap on the head over the rail: they say they are a very hardy fish.

6. *Mr. McClure.*] Give them a bash on the head for the purpose of getting the hook out?—Yes, to get the hook out.

CHARLES ROBERTSON.

In regard to the question of the beds being depleted, I may say I have been connected with the fishing about thirty years. In fact, my brothers and I—I think we came from Kaipipi to Horse-shoe Bay in 1884, and we were told we would get plenty of blue-cod there; but for some reason or other that was the worst season I have ever known on the island in regard to getting fish. There were six of us, and we could not get any blue-cod. We came there in April, and it was well on into August before the fish came about. We tried from the Saddle to Port Adventure and about the islands, and there were very very few fish to be got; and I think myself, from my own experience while I was fishing, that the fish fluctuate. The year before was the best year I ever knew, and I think the fish fluctuate: that is to say, there are lean and fat years.

1. *Mr. McClure.*] I should think that very probable: you will find that in everything?—But that year I speak of we had to leave. We went to Dunedin. We could not get any fish, and the reason that was given for it by the old fishermen who were there then was that the dredging outside—of course, you must understand that at that time, or just before that time, the oysters used to get outside of Horse-shoe Bay, and the old fishermen attributed it at that time to the dredging outside having spoilt the feed; but my experience since then has led me to believe that was not the reason. Of course, I cannot speak of recent years, for I have not been fishing, but I think there is no doubt the fishing-grounds are much the same as they were, but I would not like to say whether the fish are as large. We were the first that started buying by weight, and, in some of the catches, I could mention men who got nothing else but small fish.

2. Were they marketable?—Well, we canned them. We did not care what size the fish were. We did not see the small fish until we started buying by weight. I believe buying by weight is the reason why we see so many small fish nowadays.

Mr. Traill: There is a gentleman here, a delegate from Riverton, Mr. Stirling: he is now prepared to give his experience in connection with the fishing-grounds off Riverton.

3. *Mr. Crockett.*] Mr. Robertson, do you think the fact of the Norwegian vessels whaling there this year has made any difference to the catch of the fish?—Well, I should not be surprised; at any rate, they brought hawks around.

4. They started about the time this new Act was brought in?—I think so.

5. Do you also think the vessels oystering this year have had anything to do with it?—I should not be surprised at that either.

6. Is Mr. Robertson aware that on the old oyster-bed at Stewart Island—on the very middle of it—they used to catch blue-cod?—Yes, I am aware of it, but not in my time.

7. What year did you say you went to Stewart Island?—When I started there it was in 1884.

8. That is just about my time too, and we used to catch fish in the very middle of the bed?—Well, that was the reason I got, and you know some of the men I had fishing for me.

Mr. Hansen: You were speaking about sharks. None of us have seen any sharks since the whalers have been there; and as far as altering the ship is concerned, I do not think that the ship itself would have any effect in the fishing industry, and they have not got a whale since the new regulations have been in force, and the fact of the whaler being there would not have any effect on the fishing outside Half-moon Bay.

Mr. Crockett: I would like to ask the speaker, is it not a fact that several whaling-steamers have been racing up and down getting whales this season?

Mr. Hansen: Not since the new regulations came out. There has not been a whale caught there for the last four months.

Mr. Crockett: I am very pleased to hear that. How long have these regulations been in force?

Mr. McClure: Since the 14th March, 1912.

Mr. Crockett: I certainly think there have been whales caught since that time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hansen: I was speaking about since these new regulations have been enforced, and they have not been enforced over twelve months.

Mr. McClure : No, they were only gazetted in March, 1912.

Mr. Crocket : We have seen whales this year.

Mr. McClure : Have the Norwegians seen them and caught them ?

Mr. Crocket : We have seen the steamers.

Mr. McClure : Yes, I suppose it is possible to see steamers almost any day passing up and down the strait.

Mr. Crocket : You do not quite understand me, Mr. Chairman—I say we have seen whaling-steamers since that date.

WILLIAM STIRLING, Fisherman, Riverton.

I have been fishing off and on for these last twenty years, but for the last ten years steadily. I find there has been very little difference in the catches of fish for the last ten years, with the exception of this year. It has been very poorly with us round about Centre Island, but I put that down to the inclement weather, and so much wet and floods coming down the several rivers which has shifted, I suppose, the natural-food of the blue-cod. I always find whenever there is a flood the fish round our way become scarce, but as soon as the weather-conditions and the water become clear the fish bite as well as ever. As regards the small fish, we find it a loss to us to the extent of about, I should say, from 15 to 20 per cent. We have a mixed sort of fish up there. We have not a great deal of small fish, but we find we have that loss, and lots of other fishermen say it is very hard to tell the difference when you pull up a fish—you cannot tell exactly what he will be, and you say to yourself, "I will chance it—I think he will be within the regulations"; but when you come to clean that fish you find he is 1 oz. or $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. under, and I think it is a pity to see that fish wasted. As regards protection, I reckon cod should be protected in this way—the small fish should be protected. If the fishermen would study and take a little time—I have proved it, and it does not take very much time to unhook a cod and chuck him over if under the size. It is for their own protection. Some will get away—and then there are the natural enemies, the mollymauks—some will get away all right, but some, as I say, will be taken by their natural enemies, and I think if we could restrict them to $\frac{1}{2}$ lb cleaned it would be a fair thing.

1. *Mr. McClure*.] Half a pound cleaned : that would be, in the green state, how much ?—About 12 oz. As far as this close season is concerned, the rest of the fishermen of Riverton are not in favour of the close season, for the very time that you want to close the season—about the spawning season, I should say, about October—that is when we notice spawn mostly down our way—is generally our best fishing-time, and some of the families depend mostly on fishing, and they can go out and get a few whenever they want to, and if we close the season it puts those people out of a living, and naturally, I suppose, the cod close their own season : when they are spawning, of course, they do not bite.

Mr. McClure : Then they are wiser than the average human being, these cod.

ARTHUR WILLIAM TRAILL.

Gentlemen,—These are all the representatives of the fishermen that are present. I would like to submit the suggestion respectfully to the Commissioners, and request them to lay before the Government, on behalf of the fishermen—that is, in any new regulations that are under consideration, or alterations in the Fishing Regulations—that the fishermen of Stewart Island and other centres should have an opportunity in some way of being represented and their views being expressed in some way. You know in this case, when certain alterations have been made after fishing-permits have been taken out and paid for it has had a very disastrous effect as far as fish in Stewart Island are concerned, and I know some people have left the islands because they could not make a living since this took place, and I would like to make this suggestion to the Commissioners. Of course, the fishermen were suggesting trying to form a union and have things in their own hands. Well, unions have been tried in connection with the fishing industry, and I am speaking my own view, and most of the fishermen agree with me, that these unions have been most disastrous to an industry that is subservient to the tides and winds which wait for no man, and I think it would be better if the Government allowed the fishermen to express their views on any regulations that are under consideration.

1. *Mr. McClure*.] You mean that any regulations before being gazetted should be submitted to the fishermen ?—Yes.

2. *Mr. Ayson*.] Then you would require that the fishermen should have a Fishermen's Association or have some union ?—Yes ; have a meeting and consider the regulations then.

3. I may say that in Kaitia the fishermen have what is called a "Fishermen's Association," and they have regular meetings and discuss matters affecting their interests. I would like to ask you, Mr. Traill, whether we are to understand that the fishermen wish to revert to the old size-limit ?—Yes, they wish to revert to the old size-limit, or the 10 in. measurement.

4. You have heard what Mr. Stirling has said : he said a $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. cleaned limit would be a fair thing ?—That is not the opinion of the fishermen of Stewart Island.

5. Have they discussed that point ?—Yes.

6. A $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. cleaned fish would probably mean a fish about 12 in. in length ?—(Voices)—About 11 in.

7. Would you suggest 10 in. as a measurement in lieu of the $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. ?—Yes, that would be satisfactory to the fishermen.

8. As you know, a lot of the fish come in headed and gutted, so it would also be necessary to have a specified measurement for the headed fish ?—Yes ; that would be about 8 in. : 8 in. headed and 10 in. with head on is what the fishermen of Stewart Island suggest.

9. *Mr. Ayson.*] Well, then, with Mr. Stirling's suggestion it means 1 in. difference in the length, if 10 in. means 8 in. cleaned?—Yes, that would be about 1 in. difference.

10. Would the fishermen agree to that—to a 10 in. measurement?—Yes, they would agree to that, and I think would be quite satisfied.

11. Ten inches in the natural state and 8 in. when headed?

Mr. Stirling: I think that would be very fair for Stewart Island and Riverton; that would suit us just as well as the $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. cleaned.

EVIDENCE OF THE FISH-MERCHANTS.

ANGELO PASCO, Fish-merchant, Invercargill.

For years past it has been known that the fish were to be 8 oz., and some time last year, towards the end of last year, the Collector of Customs was passing my shop—I suppose it is just as well for all the fishermen to know how this regulation came about—and in the window there were some blue-cod exposed for sale, and Mr. Spence came along and he said he thought I was overstretching the mark by selling these fish, and I said I could not help it as the fish were caught and I bought them and was trying to sell them. He said, "The best thing you can do is to put a few of them on the scale and see what they go." They went just over the 4 oz. Mr. Spence sent them away, and the next thing after a little while we find that new regulations were made. Had the fishermen stuck properly to 8 oz., and looked after their own interests and the interests of those who sold them, there would not have been a word about it, but they abused the regulations. People would not buy these wee sprats of fish. I know many of the fish-merchants here, and many of the fishermen have been up in my shop when we have been cleaning fish and half of them have been thrown into the waste-tubs practically useless.

1. *Mr. McClure.*] But, Mr. Pascoe, an 8 oz. fish is a marketable fish?—Yes, an 8 oz. fish is a fair thing.

2. In buying your fish do you simply buy them blind? Were you buying them directly from the fishermen?—We do not see the fish that are bought. They are bought from the freezing-works. We do not see the fish.

3. That would not prevent the fish-merchant from inspecting them?—No one was sticking to the regulations.

4. If these small fish came in they were absolutely valueless for sale purposes; if you refused to pay for them the man who caught these fish or froze them would be at a loss. You can say, "I will not take these fish." The remedy is in the hands of the seller?—It was not so.

Mr. McClure: I should say it is very bad business on your part to accept those fish.

C. T. SULLIVAN.

I have been buying here for a small time just in my brother's interests in Dunedin, and the way we have to pay for and accept fish independent of your laws and regulations in this: The fish are caught in Stewart Island, cleaned and cased in our respect by the fishermen. They are sent over to us with the weight marked on by the fishermen—the net weight of those fish contained in that case. We have to accept that weight as the weight to pay by, and if we sell that fish to a fishmonger or shopkeeper he has to pay us according to that weight if we can get it from him. We have to take the fishermen's weight. It goes into the freezer, the weight is marked on them—they are not weighed there; they have no responsibility. The only responsibility we have is this: we have to pay the fishermen their weight, and when it comes to Melbourne we get the actual weight, and the difference I have found by weighing the cases. In one instance I sent seventy-five cases to Melbourne, and the exact weight I could give you was a difference of 6 lb. per case that was lost from the time they were weighed by the fishermen to the time we got our returns from Melbourne.

1. *Mr. McClure.*] But that has nothing to do with this inquiry. You are speaking of the gross weights of fish, not the size of the fish at all, simply the gross weight of cases; and I should imagine, as I said to Mr. Pascoe, the remedy lies in your own hands. If the business is worth carrying on I should imagine that you would refuse to take the fishermen's weights. You would appoint a man in Stewart Island to see that the fish were proper fish and that the weights were correct?—You have to accept them, because you cannot get a place to weigh it.

2. By the loss entailed in your business or the fish-merchants' business collectively in twelve months in the amount of fish that you pay for which you say are valueless, would it not almost pay to buy a weighing-machine at the Bluff or wherever you were?—The trade is so erratic that you cannot tell any moment—one moment you get a lot of fish and the next moment none. To keep a man there to do nothing else but weigh fish, you can imagine that if he was there for seven days in the week to weigh fish, and the fish came in one day in the week, there would be six days he would not know what to do with himself.

3. Your complaint is not about the size of the fish—it is the amount in each case: is that not so?—Yes. The size of the fish does not appear to us until we have sold it to the retailer.

4. Do you wish regulations providing that the Government will guarantee the fishermen's weights?—No, we have to accept that. But it was your statement just now to us that we should look to it.

5. That was merely a suggestion. I do not wish to run your business. It seemed such an impossible statement from a business man to say that he receives fish and has to accept the weights as sent out?—Unless he has a packing-shed. If he has a packing-shed he can weigh them himself; if not, he has to accept the fishermen's weights.

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.

Mr. Traill : I have never been informed by the fishermen that there is any check being made by the fish-merchants, until suddenly they go to the Government and ask them to raise the minimum, and *Mr. Crocket* is now calmly suggesting to the Commissioners that the Government should do the work and check their fish.

Mr. Hansen : You have never made any complaint to us about the fish.

Mr. Crocket : There are certain fishermen, *Mr. Hansen*, that there is no necessity to make complaints to. There are others that you have to suffer for.

Mr. Hansen : You never complained to us about them being small, and yet the restrictions are blocked on to us now.

Mr. McClure : *Mr. Crocket*, your suggestion was 11 in. green ; that would be 9 in. headed, in length ?

Mr. Crocket : I will be quite prepared to accept 8 in. in length headed and gutted.

Mr. McClure : Eight inches headed, *Mr. Crocket* : that would mean 10 in. in the green natural state ?

Mr. Crocket : Somewhere about that, sir, I think.

Mr. McClure : Would that be acceptable to the fish-merchants ?

Mr. Crocket : Yes, as long as the fish are headed in a proper manner, sir.

Mr. Ayson : I understood you to say 11 in. green, *Mr. Crocket* ?

Mr. Crocket : Yes, I judge that would be the basis on which an 8 in. cleaned and headed fish would go—somewhere about that ; but if you got an 8 oz. cod and headed and gutted it you could find the weight from that.

Mr. Ayson : I think it would be rather a good idea if there could be an agreement with regard to size between the fishermen and the fish-merchants.

Mr. Crocket : There is not a great deal between the two parties now, is there, sir ?

Mr. McClure : It seems to me there is nothing. If the fish-merchants will take an 8 in. cleaned fish, well that means practically 10 in. not headed.

Mr. Crocket : Yes, I think it is about a fair thing.

Mr. Stirling : On behalf of Riverton I think the same thing, and I do not think there is much difference between *Mr. Traill* and the rest of us.

Mr. Traill : The fishermen are quite agreeable to 8 in. headed and 10 in. with the head on ? [Practical demonstration of how head should be taken off.]

Mr. Ayson : *Mr. Traill*, would the fishermen make any concession in the length which they have suggested—that is, will they stretch a point ?

Mr. Traill : I think they are inclined to stick to the 10 in. length for the green fish.

Mr. Ayson : Taking 2 in. off for the head seems to be rather more than the head does actually take away according to measurements we have made here.

Mr. Traill : That would mean 8½ in. headed ?

Mr. McClure : That would be an 8 oz. fish ?

Mr. Crocket : No, sir.

Mr. Ayson : Below ?

Mr. Crocket : Below 8 oz.

Mr. McClure : A 10 in. fish as caught would weigh 8 oz.

Mr. Traill : Yes.

Mr. McClure : Are the fish-merchants agreeable to that—to an 8 oz. fish ?

Mr. Crocket : We think it should be a little higher.

Mr. McClure : Every one seems to agree that the length-limit is the best.

Mr. Crocket : I think 11 in. in length is quite small enough, sir.

Mr. Hansen : Go 10½ in. and split the difference.

Mr. Ayson : 10½ in. ; that would mean 9 in. headed : 1½ in. for the head ?

Mr. Jensen : 9 in. headed.

Mr. Ayson : 10½ in. green.

Mr. Crocket : Provided they are properly headed.

Mr. Pasco : Some of them leave the eyes in.

Mr. McClure : Are you agreeable, fishermen, to 10½ in. ?

Mr. Traill : The fishermen agree to 10½ in. and 9 in. headed.

Mr. Roderique : We will be satisfied with that as long as the fish are headed properly. They must take more than the lip and the eyes off.

Mr. Ayson : Would you specify what taking the head off means ?

Mr. Pasco : The eyes must not be showing. Cut off at the back of the eyes.

Mr. McClure : Well, gentlemen, I suppose you have nothing further to say in the matter. *Mr. Ayson* and I will prepare our report, and I think this suggestion of 10½ in. and 9 in. should meet the case. We thank you for your attendance, and if there are any other matters outside the regulations of blue-cod we will sit here this afternoon and take evidence.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given ; printing (1,200 copies), £7.