

also ask that every factory to which a license is issued shall be capable of treating the whole of the whale, and that the carcass and bones shall not be cast into the sea again, as is done at some places at present.

*To the Chairman:* We ask that the whaling-vessels shall not approach within fifty miles of one another, and that the factories shall not be under a hundred miles apart. I understand that such laws exist in other countries. I understand in regard to factories that the provision here applies only to Crown land. There is nothing to prevent Norwegians coming here again and buying a piece of land and setting up in opposition to the present whalers engaged in the industry. We also ask that a duty be put on imported fish-oil and so-called Japanese oil to fetch it up to £30 a ton in Wellington, in order to give the New Zealand people a fair margin of profit. We desire the Government to send a trial shipment of, say, 5 tons of whale-meat (frozen) to Japan, or canned whale-meat. We are prepared to supply the whale-meat in the freezing-works free for the trial shipment. There are eight factories in America, and one factory in 1916 sold 300 tons of whale-meat.

*To Mr. Hornsby:* Whale-meat tastes like beef. We have now a plant worth £3,000, and our last season's catch amounted to 250 tons of oil. At present there are some persons who are interfering with the proper whale-fishing industry. They have not proper equipment or factories for dealing with the whales if they succeed in catching them. We propose to get fresh plant to treat the carcass—to extract the oil and sell the bone in a dry state. I am told that the bone is worth £13 a ton.

*To Mr. Veitch:* Our factory is in Tory Channel. There are six sailors and ten men at the factory.

*To Mr. Forbes:* I have not noticed any diminution in the number of whales during the last eight years. Some of the whales go up to 100 tons—the average is about 50 tons—and up to 55 ft. long. The nearest whaling-station to ours is at Kaikoura. There are only three in New Zealand. The third is at Whangamumu, north of Auckland. There are seven of us in our party. We have invested £3,000 in the industry. It is a staple industry; it is not a thing that will die out. Whale-oil is used in the manufacture of very many things now. I understand that about 8 per cent. of chocolate-cream is made from whale-oil.

*To the Chairman:* The party of Norwegians left after the last provision was made in regard to a license; but there is no license or restriction for boats under 25 tons.

H. J. MITCHELL examined.

As a member of the Chamber of Commerce I desire to say something with regard to the lime which Mr. A. Thomson has referred to. I am not personally interested in the matter. Mr. Thomson has a very fine farm at Ward. It is in the interest of the district that the lime-deposit should be developed. There is another deposit of lime within four or five miles from Blenheim, but the deposit at that place is not being worked now. There is a considerable amount of building-lime used in this district. The rivers here are full of shingle suitable for making concrete. One firm here uses 40 tons of building-lime per month. We would like a Government expert to report upon these lime-deposits, and say whether they are worth developing. I will furnish the Committee with particulars as to the location of the deposit. There is understood to be coal close to the deposit. We have approached the Government with reference to hydro-electric power, and experts have visited Lake Rotoiti, but we have not received their report yet. We consider that we should get preference over other districts for the reason that our big coal-bearing country is at Westport and the surrounding district; and the distance between Westport and Picton overland is not great, and when the bars are bound and the weather conditions are unfavourable on the Coast the coal could be conveyed over to Picton at a minimum cost by electric railway. The grade would be an easy one, and there are no obstacles in the way. Not only from a commercial, but also from a strategical point of view, the carrying-out of such a project would be important. Admiral Halsey, R.N., has expressed the opinion that Picton would be an ideal naval base for New Zealand.

E. PARKER examined.

I have been asked by the Mayor of Blenheim to bring under the notice of the Committee one or two matters. This is not a manufacturing district; our industries are mainly farming. Numbers of our men are now coming back from the front, and the Repatriation Board is interested in keeping them in the district and in creating, if possible, industries in which the men may be engaged. In addition to the agricultural industry, a number of men might be settled on small areas, and the establishment of the bee industry here would be an assistance. It has already started here. Then there is the fruit industry. There are a lot of old orchards here, and at present large quantities of fruit of various kinds goes rotten every year owing to lack of development of the fruit industry. We can grow many kinds of fruit here admirably, including apples, apricots, pears, plums, &c. We are endeavouring to start a small fruit-factory, and the Government has intimated that it is prepared to advance £2,000 towards putting up the factory. The fruit industry, including fruit-preserving, would go ahead here if fostered. We have abundance of river-gravel here suitable for making concrete, and we have also lime-deposits.