

tickets were issued on the railways, but at present these are not issued. We have made representations to the Department, but have got no satisfaction. We pay from 1d. to 1½d. for good apples at the cannery.

*To Dr. A. K. Newman:* I consider that the small canning-factories ought to be subsidized in a short season.

J. PATERSON, Member of Markets Committee, Auckland City Council, examined.

I am a member of the Markets Committee of the Auckland City Council. The Council commenced to deal with the fishing industry about four years ago. A loan of £20,000 was authorized, and with that capital the committee are working at the present time. The reason for entering upon the industry was on account of the high price of fish. The people were calling out about it. The Council therefore decided to do something to reduce the price, and it has done so to some extent. When we commenced we were told that with the trawlers we could catch fish at £5 per ton, but we have found that it costs us £10 all round. That is the cost of the fish landed in our markets—landed but not cleaned. We have two trawlers, one of 30 tons, the other of 69 tons. The Government took our large trawler sixteen months ago for mine-sweeping, and as a consequence the market has suffered considerably in the quantity of fish upon it. The larger vessel was a North Sea trawler, and can go out to sea a good distance, but the other vessel remains much nearer the shore. The market is controlled by a manager with a staff of eight in the daytime and of six at night. Altogether in the industry there are forty-one men employed—on the trawlers, in the shop, and in other ways. With five more men we could handle double the quantity of fish.

*To the Chairman:* The cost of the two trawlers was about £12,000. We also buy from the lines-men. Last year we purchased 361 tons of fish from them, for which we paid £6,283. Line fish command better prices than trawled fish. Snapper caught by the line are a better class of fish for smoking than the trawled snapper. Our chief supply is the snapper. In our market we sell to shops, and we also have a shop of our own. We supply hotels, restaurants, and so on from the market. In the shop we sell fresh snapper, cleaned, at 3½d. per pound; smoked snapper, 5d. and 6d. per pound. In the smoking there is a loss on the fish, hence the higher price for the smoked fish. Fresh mullet is sold at 4d. per pound, and smoked at 5d. At present we cannot supply the public with smoked fish for three days in the week, owing to an insufficiency of supply. Sanford Limited have three trawlers competing with ours. We try to work amicably with the Sanford Company. The venture on the part of the City Council is not very profitable at the present time. As a matter of fact, the trawlers are not large enough, and cannot go out to sea to work in all sorts of weather. Up to the present we have lost money on the undertaking.

*To Dr. A. K. Newman:* I cannot say whether the supply of fish, taking each year by itself, is less than it was ten years ago. The supply is less this year than last year, probably because we have not been able to go out far enough.

*To Mr. Sidey:* I do not think that the State could run the industry better than the City Council. The mesh of our nets is 4 in., and a great many of the small fish get through the mesh. We have chilling and freezing capacity up to 42 tons at the market and at the freezing-works. I understand that if there is a big catch of fish which would glut the market and bring down the price there is a temptation on the part of the fishermen not to bring the fish ashore. That, however, is not the case as far as the trawlers are concerned. At the market we take fish of all kinds—all the fish that are brought into Auckland by the fishermen.

*To Mr. Craigie:* The larger trawler could work even the west coast. The Government have tested the various fishing-grounds of the Dominion. If we had larger trawlers we could go out for three or four days and have a freezer on board. If the city wants to have fish in quantity it must go in for that scheme.

*To Mr. Hudson:* We pay wages to the crew. They have no shares, and we give nothing extra on catches. The captain gets £6 per week. We are not underselling Sanford. At present we are making a loss, but I do not think we will continue to do so. When we get our big trawler back we ought to be able to make ends meet. It is a beam trawler we use. I do not think our method of fishing, with a net with a wire or chain foot-rope, injures the breeding-grounds of the fish. We may not go over the same piece of sea-bed for a year or so. The 4 in. mesh is right through the net. There is a proposal at present to alter the fishing-limits so that the captains will have landmarks to guide them. If the limits are reduced it will not be detrimental to the line fishermen.

*To Mr. Veitch:* Sanfords do not get better results in trawling than we do.

*To Mr. Sidey:* The price of fish to-day is slightly in excess of the price before the Corporation entered into the business. This is caused by the higher cost of material, coal, and so on.

*Witness:* There is a point I should like to stress. The Government have admitted cotton twine free for net purposes. In nets there is a good deal of hemp twine used, and I consider that that hemp twine should also be admitted free for fishing purposes.

*To the Chairman:* There is no provision made for the treatment of the offal. Offal makes one of the best manures, and it should be all used. At present, however, there are no ways to make it into manure, and it is taken to sea and dumped. It takes 8 tons of offal to make 1 ton of manure. A plant of the value of £2,000 or £3,000 would be required to deal with the offal.

*Witness:* I also wish to make a suggestion in regard to the carriage of fish by rail. There is great difficulty in getting proper carriage in suitable vans, and the Government in their own interests ought to provide insulated vans.

*To the Chairman:* If we have a surplus after supplying the city we supply outside towns by rail as far as we can. When we established the business we were looking forward to supplying outside towns.