

practice. The views of each section of those interested in the timber industry were submitted to the meeting, and a comprehensive and frank discussion characterized the conference, which concluded with the unanimous adoption of the following resolution: "That the Merchants' Federation, the Builders' Federation, and the Institute of Architects be asked to submit to the special Timber Committee such modifications of the Standard Grading and Classification Rules as they consider would render such rules acceptable in the interests of all parties; and, further, that a fair trial meantime be given to the Timber Committee's standard rules."

As a result of the conference a better feeling has been created between the sawmiller, timber-merchant, and architect, and the committee feel confident that greater consideration will be given to the use of native timbers in buildings and other constructional work.

The committee propose in future to co-opt the Institute of Architects, timber-merchants, and sawmillers to assist them in respect of any modification of the Standard Grading and Classification rules.

The committee has also made representations to the Right Hon. the Prime Minister that preference be given to New Zealand timber and other building-materials for use in Government constructional work, and also in buildings on which Government loans have been granted.

INQUIRY INTO THE MARKETING OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES.

A request for an inquiry into the present methods of marketing fruit and vegetables was brought before the House of Representatives in October, 1929, by a petition signed by 156 Wellington fruit-retailers.

The Department reported last year that the Prime Minister agreed that the inquiry should be conducted by the parliamentary Committee of Industries and Commerce. The matter was referred to in the House of Representatives on the 23rd July, 1930, when it was directed that the above Committee should investigate the subject-matter of the petition.

An inquiry was accordingly held, and evidence was received from forty-four witnesses, including growers, auctioneers, merchants, retailers, and others. The Committee, after careful deliberation, reported on the 14th October, 1930, that in their opinion the subject-matter of the petition was too large and involved for a sessional Committee to deal with in all its ramifications. It was also the opinion of the Committee that a recess Committee should be appointed with enlarged powers, or, alternatively, that the inquiry should be conducted in the four centres by the Department of Industries and Commerce (which already has all necessary powers) and the Department of Agriculture, and, further, that one or more members of Parliament should be associated with these Departments in the inquiry.

The report of the Committee has been printed, and is available to all persons interested.

MARKETING OF FISH.

The Department has made extensive inquiries during the last few months into the marketing and prices of fish in the four principal centres of the Dominion, and also in regard to the Bluff and Stewart Island fishing industry. As a result a considerable amount of valuable information in relation to all phases of the industry has been obtained, more particularly in regard to the conduct of the trade and to prices at all stages.

A report embodying the results of the Department's investigations has been submitted to the Hon. the Minister of Industries and Commerce.

The slump in the Australian fish-market has seriously affected the export trade from the Dominion, and the New Zealand Trade and Tourist Commissioner in Australia has been instructed to report fully upon the possibility of improving matters in Australia in so far as the handling and marketing of fish exported from New Zealand is concerned.

Many attempts have been made to utilize the large supplies of fresh-water eels that are available in lakes and rivers throughout the Dominion. The best market for these is thought to be the United Kingdom, where large supplies of live eels are received from the Continent. Several shipments of frozen eels have been made from the Dominion during recent years, but the results obtained had not been entirely satisfactory. In order to investigate the possibilities of landing frozen eels in London in good market condition, a committee, consisting of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, the Dominion Analyst, and a representative of this Department, was appointed to carry out research work in this connection. After reviewing the various methods used in catching, cleaning, freezing, and packing the eels shipped on previous occasions, the committee arranged with a Wairarapa syndicate to catch a quantity of eels, and these were prepared at Lake Wairarapa under the supervision of the Fisheries Branch of the Marine Department and sent to cold store in Wellington by motor. These eels were treated in three different ways, and frozen at the lowest temperature available and held in cold storage pending shipment. The report received from London regarding the condition of the eels on arrival was satisfactory as to the eels prepared in one particular way, and the defects pointed out in the others will be guarded against in subsequent shipments.

The value placed on the consignment in London was from 6d. to 7d. per pound. This was not considered sufficient by the syndicate concerned to justify a continuance of shipments of eels at the present time. The decision in this matter was also influenced by the fact that the market requires eels not exceeding 1 lb. in weight, which are difficult to procure during the winter season.