

fishing ports. Allowance would need to be made, of course, for irregularity of supplies due to weather and other conditions. The whole aim must be towards getting supplies to their destination as quickly and as cheaply as possible. The impression has been gained that the Auckland wholesalers think they have some right to dominate the supply position for the greater part of the Auckland Provincial District, but if this is true they must be brought to realize that Tauranga, Thames, Whakatane, and other centres have what might be regarded as a prior claim upon the local market in areas adjacent to these ports, consistent always with price and quality. With respect to the Bay of Plenty area in particular, it is pointed out here (as elsewhere in the report) that the Auckland vessels are fishing in the Bay, taking the catch to Auckland and returning a proportion of this to clients in, say, Rotorua and its vicinity. Complaints were made that supplies from Kawhia and Raglan are more than successfully competing with supplies from Auckland and Thames. There is one difficulty in this connection, but not a difficulty of the Auckland wholesalers, in that a retailer in a King-country centre may arrange to take the bulk of the supplies from, say, Kawhia or Raglan fishermen and leave his competitor in the same centre with no option but to order fish from Auckland or Thames at a higher cost at these points plus railage.

These instances of lack of co-ordination are quoted to show the need for it.

Thames.

In regard to the internal distribution from Thames, much the same remarks in respect of co-ordination as are applicable to Auckland apply here with equal force. Reference was made to Tauranga's claim that its "on rail" price should be lower, as rail freights were higher to most points served. The difference is negligible on the average, and it is now understood that Tauranga's prices are in keeping with those of Thames. Representations were made by a Thames fisherman that the rail freight upon mussels was out of all proportion to their value, which was 7s. 6d. per sack at Thames, while the railage to below Palmerston North was 8s. 6d. per sack, mounting to 10s. 10d. at New Plymouth.

The Thames markets arrange for transport of fish to Auckland by their own lorries, and under the Transport Regulations no backloading is permitted for any market other than that to which the lorry belongs. With the amalgamation of the four markets into one, difficulties such as these would not, of course, arise.

New Plymouth, Wanganui, and Palmerston North.

To these three centres fish has to be brought considerable distances, and freight rates add by no means an inconsiderable amount to the cost. From Auckland to New Plymouth the railage may go as high as 1d. per pound when small lots are coming forward. Mussels costing 7s. 6d. per sack at Thames bear an added cost of 10s. 10d. railage to New Plymouth, making 18s. 4d. in all.

Wellington.

Transport services upon the whole are generally satisfactory, but improvements were suggested in regard to the facilities for the railage of fish to the Wairarapa, and a request was made that certain quantities of fish might be permitted to be despatched to Auckland as required upon the 3 p.m. Express. It was also suggested that if the general system of internal distribution were better organized and insulated wagons were warranted for the transport of fish, sales to country customers could be extended.

TRANS-TASMAN SHIPPING SERVICES.

Under "Export" in this part reference has been made to the trans-Tasman shipping services from South Island ports, which are at a disadvantage compared with Auckland and Wellington in the matter of frequency of sailings. Quoted below are particulars of the refrigerated space available for fish on trans-Tasman vessels:—

		Cubic Feet.			Cubic Feet.
"Wanganella"	..	8,250	"Waikouaiti"	..	2,600
"Awatea"	..	15,000	"Aorangi"	..	*
"Waitaki"	..	8,000	"Niagara"	..	*
"Maunganui"	..	7,000			

* These vessels can always take fish, but the space available varies according to the quantity of fruit in transit to Sydney.

Recommendations.

New Zealand.

1. That as ancillary to other recommendations the distribution of fish to inland centres in New Zealand be better organized so as to eliminate, wherever possible, the uneconomic overlapping in supply which takes place.

Auckland.

2. That the Railways Department be approached with a view to meeting the suggestions brought forward by the Auckland wholesalers in the matter of trucking fish at an earlier hour than appears necessary, of establishing a siding at the Western Wharf if found to be warranted, and of the feasibility of utilizing an adaptation of the rail car for quick transport of fish when the industry is better organized.

Picton and French Pass.

3. That the practice of shipping fish in sacks from French Pass and Picton be abolished and that all fish (except crayfish) be shipped in cases.