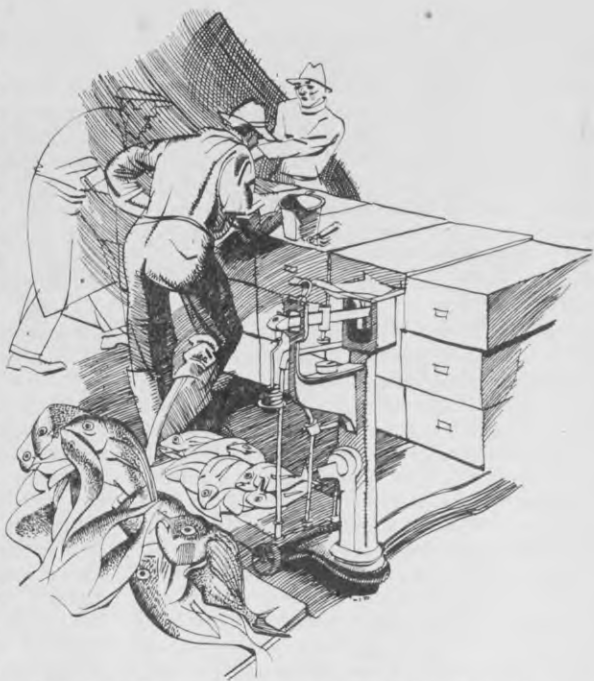


hurrying either. A youth passes with a rifle at the trail, a sugar-bag on his arm, a dog at his heels. Probably rabbits in that bag. It's easy to see horse-shoes are more plentiful than tires and petrol. There are lots of horses in Thames besides Hunto; they mightn't be as fast, they're certainly more shaggy, but at least they're friendly. Steady, sure-footed, they don't mind the steep hills: one shepherd's horse could turn on three-pence, and he didn't mean six-pence. More dogs than horses though, and they find the centre of the main street as comfortable a place as any to sleep in the sun. Lots of shops, country shops; and if you're from the city you find it strange to see the latest fashions in hats and frocks in one half of the window, saddles and axes and spades in the other.

It's strange, you think, that in a small country centre like Thames you have two foundries as large, as busy, as modern as most in New Zealand. Thames must be low in the list of places you'd think likely to make heavy railway engines, huge cast-iron lighthouses, or, in some cases to their own design, steamship engines. Boilers, giant timber-haulers, and stone-crushers are just a matter of course. Two hundred men are employed, both firms are kept busy—the last years to a great extent with munitions contracts. Both firms, too, have been established for more than seventy years. And the dates of their establishment give you the answer to your wondering—1869, 1870. Gold-mining days. You remember the stories of the batteries of crushers needed for that quartz. Here is where they were cast. Business increased, the shops were gradually added to.

With the decline of mining in the district, the firms' work turned in other directions. One shop specialized in the manufacture of sawmilling and bush-working machinery, log-haulers in par-



*Fish from Thames is sent all over the North Island.*

ticular. Some of the largest kauri trees ever felled in New Zealand were from the Thames. Locally made haulers were large and powerful enough to bring out quickly whole trunks long distances over rough, tough bush and hill country without the construction of miles of expensive tram-lines. One of these haulers proved its strength at the Billy Goat, Kauaeranga Bush (not many miles from Thames): for nearly a mile down a grade of 1 in 3 it lowered at one time loads of from 6,000 ft. to 10,000 ft. of timber.

The foundry managers say there is little disadvantage from their apparently isolated position. Scow, railway, and truck provide fast, frequent transport; a rush job can be delivered from the foundry to Auckland in less than two hours. The modern tendency, especially since the war, has been for manufacturing concerns to transfer and expand their premises to the country. The two foundries at Thames were seventy years ahead of the times.