

1885.

NEW ZEALAND.

DEVELOPMENT OF COLONIAL INDUSTRIES

(PAPERS RELATING TO THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

I. FISHERIES.

CORRESPONDENCE.

No. 1.

Mr. J. MACKENZIE to the Hon. Sir JULIUS VOGEL.

SIR,—

Port Chalmers, 29th March, 1885.

After reviewing the conversation Mr. Thomson and myself had the honour of having with you yesterday about colonial fishery, I think that perhaps it might help you in gaining further information on the subject, unconnected with local or interested opinion, by giving you condensed extracts from my note-books written at the time I made the examination in each locality. I may here state that the firm of Marshall and Co., who commissioned me to make the researches referred, is now associated with the firm of Gillon and Co. The new departure, so to speak, in Scotch fishing, viz., steam-trawling, has caused the amalgamation of the two firms. Although I have not the authority of the firm for using their name, I do not think there is any harm in doing so.

Auckland was my first port of call. The intense heat of the climate there theoretically is against it as a fish-preserving or curing country for other than the most costly processes of preserving and the dearest kinds of fish, only suitable, as far as price is concerned, for consumption as a delicacy and rarity by the wealthy. I carefully fished the Firth of Thames, round Cape Colville to Port Charles, Kennedy Bay, and Mercury Bay; found plenty of firm, delicate fish, the snapper being the only large fish that could be got in anything like large quantities. Examined the coast northwards as far as Whangarei Bay; found snapper, mullet, kahawai, and bream of fine quality; but as the weather was so bad I did not devote much attention to this locality, further than to satisfy myself that fish in countless millions frequent the neighbourhood of Great and Little Barrier Isles, and the Firth of Thames. I crossed overland to Kaipara Harbour. During my visit the whole harbour from Helensville at the one end to Aratapu at the other end, a distance of over thirty miles, seemed to be actually swarming with the largest and finest mullet in the world. Those fish will not take hook and bait, and are very difficult to net. For tinning this is a fine fish, but, as they are covered with a thick coat of very strong scales, the cost of cleaning them for tinning will, in my opinion, cause the cost of production to be too high to allow it to be sold cheap enough to command ready sale other than as a luxury. I am afraid that it will turn soft in the tin. Although I examined the coast-line from Kaipara Heads to Waitara, near New Plymouth, including the harbour or bays of Manukau, Waikato, Whaingaroa, Aotea, and Kawhia, I am not in a position to say that fish always inhabit this region, but I am satisfied that large shoals of snapper, mullet, and kahawai are to be found here during some portion of the year inshore, and most likely offshore all the year round. I found soles or flounders, kelpfish, mullet, and bream everywhere inshore, and also many varieties of small but very excellent fish that I cannot name or classify. After rounding Cape Egmont, rough weather prevented me from fishing until off the Island of Kapiti, and off that island and the Island of Mana I hooked proper and netted moki and rock-cod, and got also crayfish, kelpfish, and butterfish.

Port Nicholson, or Wellington Harbour, and Palliser Bay I did not examine, because I got all the information I wanted from the local fishermen and the Wellington fishmongers. From Wellington I went to Nelson, and from thence to Cape Campbell, on the east. I minutely fished all the Picton Sounds, and also tried the offshore or deep-sea fishing off Cape Campbell. I found the whole of this region actually alive with fish, and the climate more suitable for fish-preserving and curing than north of Cook Strait. The most abundant fish is the Picton herring; not a true herring, neither is it a true pilchard; but it is a good fish, and adapted for tinning and curing, and, as it is found here in immense quantities, it could be so cheaply procured that the export trade