

January 18: Authorizing Messrs McLeod and others to construct booms across the Makarau River, Kaipara.

February 13: Approving of plans of wharf at Ponsonby, Auckland.

March 2: Approving of plans of wharf at Percival Point, Governor's Bay, Lyttelton.

*Seal Fisheries.*—In last year's report I detailed the steps that had been taken for the protection of the seal fisheries. The "Kekeno" has proved to be a very suitable vessel for this purpose. She has made three trips to the Auckland and Campbell Islands, and was absent on her fourth trip to those islands at the end of the financial year. She has also made two trips to Dusky and other West Coast Sounds, and has visited the various ports and harbours in Stewart Island. Search for castaways, seal hunters, &c., has been made in all the ports in the Auckland Islands and at Campbell Island, but no persons appear to have visited the islands in question since the "Kekeno's" first trip. A survey of a danger discovered by Captain Greig at the Auckland Islands has been made, and the particulars will be forwarded to the Hydrographer to the Admiralty. On her first trip it was found that the provisions and stores at most of the depôts for the relief of castaways had been consumed or stolen, so that, had any shipwrecked persons reached the islands, the humane object for which these depôts had been established would have been frustrated. As no intelligence has been received from any quarter that these stores were consumed by persons in distress, it seems clear that they must have been used or made away with by the crews of sealing vessels, they being the only known visitants of the islands; but, whoever may have been the perpetrators of this outrage, it is certain that their conduct will be universally reprobated. The several depôts were duly replenished by the "Kekeno," and were found intact when examined on her subsequent trips. Extremely boisterous weather was met with both at the Auckland and Campbell Islands; Perseverance Harbour, in the latter place, being particularly noted for violent gales of wind. The amount expended on the "Kekeno" during the past year was £774 12s. 7d.

*Fisheries.*—It is very desirable that many of the provisions of the Fisheries Bill introduced last year should become law, as it is found that, under the Acts now in force, there are no adequate powers for stopping the reckless destruction of small fish now so generally prevalent. Fishermen's nets are almost invariably drawn up on the beach, and the small fry left to perish, instead of being returned to the water. Small fish, especially flounders, are also exposed for sale. The importance of conserving our fisheries, with the object of providing a valuable and wholesome contribution to the food supply of the people, must be patent to everybody. This subject has of late years received much attention in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and also in the Dominion of Canada, where the Government have founded several public establishments for the artificial reproduction of fish for the purpose of re-stocking the rivers. In the official report of the Commissioner of Fisheries for 1882 it is stated that the produce of the Dominion Fisheries for the year was valued at £3,217,734, and that the value of the fish exported was £1,379,777. These figures alone show how largely the fisheries of Canada contribute to the wealth of the country, and there is no reason to doubt that, under proper management, those of New Zealand will, in the future, also become an important element in the welfare of the colony.

*Inspection of Machinery.*—The report of the Chief Inspector and those of the Inspectors are attached hereto. Advantage was taken of the Inspection of Machinery Consolidation Act passed last session to arrange that the fees for inspection should no longer be collected by the Inspectors, but through the Post-office. This relieves the Inspectors of a troublesome duty involving much clerical work, and gives them more time to carry out the real work for which they were appointed, which is becoming heavier every year owing to the largely-increased use of machinery and boilers in various industries and manufactures. It will, I anticipate, soon be necessary to appoint another Inspector, or to rearrange the districts and the duties of the whole of the Inspectors in connection with both the inspection of land machinery and the survey of steamers.

*Returns, &c.*—The report of the Marine Engineer on the works carried out under his direction is appended hereto, together with the usual returns and wreck chart, &c.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM SEED,  
Secretary, Marine Department.

The Hon. the Minister having charge of the Marine Department.

RETURN showing the AMOUNT of LIGHT DUES collected during the Year ended the 31st March, 1883.

	£	s.	d.
Auckland	1,299	14	8
Onehunga	12	7	4
Whangaroa	13	2	0
Thames	4	1	0
Russell	174	11	4
Poverty Bay	12	16	0
Wanganui	7	12	8
Wellington	1,376	5	6
Napier	77	5	0
Nelson	77	4	10
Westport	13	19	0
Lyttelton	1,764	1	10
Timaru	214	0	8
Oamaru	75	4	10
Dunedin	2,218	8	2
Bluff	862	11	0
Total	£8,203	5	10