

1890.
NEW ZEALAND.

MARINE DEPARTMENT

(ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1889-90).

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

My Lord,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 31st August, 1890.

I do myself the honour to transmit herewith, for your Excellency's information, the report of the Marine Department of this colony for the financial year ended on the 31st March last.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS FERGUS,

(For the Minister having charge of the Marine Department.)

His Excellency the Right Honourable the Earl of Onslow, &c.,
Governor of New Zealand.

The ASSISTANT-SECRETARY to the Hon. the MINISTER having charge of the MARINE DEPARTMENT.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 21st May, 1890.

I do myself the honour to submit the following report of this department for the year ended 31st March last:—

Lighthouses.—An addition to the lighthouses was made during the year by the exhibition of the Cuvier Island light. This light, which was shown for the first time on the night of the 22nd September last, is a first-order revolving white light, attaining its greatest brilliancy once every thirty seconds; and, allowing 15ft. for the height of the observer's eye, it will be visible for a distance of twenty-six nautic miles. The optical apparatus was manufactured by Messrs. Barbier and Fenestre, of Paris; the lantern by Messrs. J. Dove and Co.; and the machine, lamps, &c., by J. Milne and Son, of Edinburgh. The tower, which was manufactured in Auckland, is made of cast-iron; the dwellings and stores are built of wood. The total cost of the lighthouse establishment was, exclusive of the land, which has not yet been paid for, £7,406 16s. 11d. No accident of any importance has taken place at any lighthouse, but the hauling-gear of the wire-rope tramway at Cape Maria van Diemen carried away, and has not yet been replaced. The light on the beacon at French Pass was reported by the keeper to have become extinguished on nine occasions—namely, on 28th June, from 4 to 8 a.m.; on 11th July, from 8 to 11 p.m.; on 30th July, from 2 to 7 a.m.; on 13th October, from 5 to 6 a.m.; on 21st October, from 9 to 10.30 p.m.; on 19th December, from 7 to 10 p.m.; on 13th January, from 6 to 6.15 p.m.; on 17th January, from 1 to 4 a.m.; and on 30th January, from 7 to 8 p.m. Six lightkeepers left the service during the year; the services of two having been dispensed with on account of ill-health, two having resigned, one transferred to the Harbour staff, and one died.

New Lighthouses.—Nothing further has been done in the matter of the erection of a light at the Snares. A letter has just been received from the Premier of Victoria, forwarding a copy of a despatch from the Imperial Government, in which they decline to contribute towards a light on that group. I desire again to draw attention to the desirability of proceeding with the erection of a light on Stephens' Island as soon as possible. A light there would be of great benefit to both coasting and oversea trade.

Harbours.—Changes in the banks at the entrance to Kaipara Harbour have necessitated the erection of additional beacons, and it is probable that the main beacons will have to be moved before long. At Manukau, too, the banks about the south channel have altered so much that steps have had to be taken to extend the tramways on which the beacons run, so as to be able to give a fair lead into the channel. A new upper beacon has been built, the timber in the old one being decayed. A new road has been made from the signal station to the Blow-hole, the old one being nearly impassable owing to shifting sand. I am afraid that, owing to the same cause, the signal-station will have to be moved before very long. Arrangements have been made with a resident at the mouth of the Rangitikei River to signal vessels bound in and out of that river. At Wairau an artesian well has been bored, from which an ample supply of water is procured. The deepening of the inner bar of the Mokihinui River having been completed, the balance of the amount voted was paid to the company who carried out the work.