

1896.
NEW ZEALAND.

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

(ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1895-96.)

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

MY LORD,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 31st July, 1896.

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

I have, &c.,

WM. HALL-JONES,

Minister of Marine.

His Excellency the Right Hon. the Earl of Glasgow, &c.,
Governor of New Zealand.

The SECRETARY to the MINISTER of MARINE.

Sir,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 30th May, 1896.

I have the honour to make the following report on the administration of this department during the financial year ended the 31st March last:—

Lighthouses.—Further tests have been made of the mineral colza oil referred to in my last report. The tests were carried out at Pencarrow Head Lighthouse, both with one of the ordinary paraffin burners altered for the purpose and with a Douglas burner obtained from Tasmania, but the results were not altogether satisfactory. Messrs. D. and C. Stevenson, of Edinburgh, who are engineers to the Northern Board of Lighthouses, have been asked to design a suitable burner, and to forward sufficient to enable the oil to be used at five lighthouses, so that it may be thoroughly tested before deciding to adopt it for use at all our lighthouses.

Last session Parliament voted a further sum of £800 for repairs to lighthouses and keepers' dwellings, and this has enabled many necessary works, principally repairs to dwellings, to be executed. It has, however, been found impossible to do all the repairs that are required with the money available, and it will therefore be necessary to ask for a further vote for the purpose. The works at the southern stations have been carried out under the direction of the lighthouse artificer, and those at Tiri-Tiri, which consisted of extensive repairs to the dwellings, were executed by a party of workmen under the charge of the department's carpenter, who also had charge of the construction of a tramway from near the landing-place to the top of the hill at Pencarrow Head. A new house for the principal keeper at Nelson is now in course of erection under contract, and improved accommodation for the assistant-keeper has been provided by moving the small house hitherto occupied by him and attaching it to what has hitherto been the principal keeper's house.

At the French Pass the red arc of the light has been altered so that the red and white arcs cut exactly on the buoy which marks the dangers off the Beef-barrel Rocks. The light on the beacon in the Pass has not been extinguished during the year. A sum of £81 18s. has been expended in planting native trees along the Pass side of the lighthouse reserve. Owing to the exposed position of the reserve it was found necessary to protect the trees by erecting fences round them. When the trees grow up the beauty of the lighthouse side of the Pass will be much improved.

On the night of the 12th August last the assistant-keeper at Pencarrow Head was found asleep on watch. In consequence of his previous good record during a long period of service, and of the fact that he was suffering from influenza at the time, he was not dismissed from the Lighthouse Service, but his salary was reduced by £10 a year, and he was moved to a station less favourably situated. During the year two keepers resigned, and two appointments were made to fill the vacancies thus caused. It was anticipated that the new tower at Farewell Spit would have been erected during the past summer, but, owing to the contractors failing to supply the iron tower within the prescribed time, the work of erection has not yet been put in hand.

The new landing on the south side of the Brothers has been completed, and has already prevented the delay of the "Hinemoa" on one occasion, when the sea was too rough to enable the stores, &c., to be landed at the ordinary landing-place on the northern side. The new landing-