

SESS. II.—1897.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# MARINE DEPARTMENT.

(ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1896-97.)

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

MY LORD,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 12th August, 1897.

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 Ranfurly,  
Governor of New Zealand.

The SECRETARY to the MINISTER of MARINE.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 31st May, 1897.

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.*—The cost of the maintenance of the lighthouses during the year was £15,644 4s., which includes the cost of erecting a new tower at Farewell Spit; but it does not include anything for the expenses of the Government steamer which periodically visits all the lighthouses with oil, stores, and provisions. The annual expenses of the steamer amount to about £7,000, and most of her time is occupied in attending to the lighthouses.

Parliament having voted the sum of £400 for repairs to lighthouses and keepers' dwellings, the department has been able to carry out necessary repairs, principally to the dwellings at Dog Island, Centre Island, Puysegur Point, and Tiri Tiri. At the first-named station the second assistant keeper's house, which was too small for a married man, has been enlarged by the addition of two rooms. The work at this station, at Puysegur Point, and at Tiri Tiri was done by the department's carpenter with the assistance of local men. A portion of the repairs at Centre Island were executed by the lighthouse artificer, and the remainder by the principal keeper, who is a carpenter by trade, with the assistance of a carpenter sent from Invercargill. The lighthouse artificer also carried out some necessary works at Nugget Point, the principal of which was the renewal and improvement of the roadway across the narrow neck between the tower and the dwellings. At Nelson the new house for the principal keeper has been completed, and the house-accommodation at the station is now satisfactory. The erection of this house was carried out by the Public Works Department. At Portland Island a schoolroom has been erected, and the Hawke's Bay Education Board has established a school there. It is proposed to enlarge the second assistant keeper's house at this station during the current year, to build a workshop, and to rebuild the cart-shed, which was destroyed during a heavy gale on the 30th January last. These works, and the repairs which are required at some of the other lighthouses, will necessitate a further vote being asked for during the ensuing session of Parliament.

A new tower has been erected at Farewell Spit, as the old tower was becoming unsafe from decay. The new one is an open-framed iron structure, and the height from the ground to the top of the lantern is 88 ft. The work of erection was carried out by the Public Works Department, the material being conveyed to the site by the Government steamers. In order that the light might be discontinued for as short a time as possible a new lantern was procured, and as soon as the construction of the tower was completed the lighthouse artificer proceeded to erect it. The exhibition of the light from the old tower was discontinued on the morning of the 17th January last, and the work of taking down the machine and apparatus and erecting them in the new tower was performed so expeditiously that the light was shown again on the night of the 19th of the same month. It having been reported that the water had shoaled on the Spit end, the Nautical Adviser took advantage of the opportunity of his being there in connection with the exhibition of the light from the new tower to take soundings. These showed that the water had shoaled two fathoms since the soundings shown on the Admiralty chart were taken.