

*Harbours.*—The duties of the harbour staff at the ports under the control of this Department have been properly performed. The present arrangement, under which the Northern Union Steamboat Company is paid a subsidy of £340 a year for conveying the Harbourmaster at Kaipara about the harbour and for attending to the small buoys, is not satisfactory, as the vessel is not always available when required. As the harbour is of very large extent, and there is considerable oversea shipping trade to it, it is important that the Harbourmaster should have proper means of getting about, so as to keep himself acquainted with the depths of water and with the requirements of the various parts of the harbour. To enable him to do this, he should have a small steam or oil vessel at his disposal. Pouto, where he is stationed, is too far away from the shipping-places, and he would be in a much better position to carry out his duties properly if he were moved to Aratapu.

At Manukau an oil-launch would be very useful to the Harbourmaster in connection with his harbour duties, and with the supervision of the oyster-beds, which are under his control as Inspector of Fisheries.

Mr. S. G. Robinson has resigned the position of Harbourmaster at Waitapu, and Mr. S. Fittall has been appointed to succeed him.

The buoys at most of the ports under the control of this Department have been overhauled and cleaned by the "Hinemoa," and, with the exception of those at Ngunguru, they are in good condition and proper positions. At Ngunguru some of them have disappeared, owing, it is believed, to vessels colliding with them. These will shortly be replaced. A contract has been let to erect ten beacons to mark the channel leading to Havelock, and arrangements have been made for the erection of beacons to mark the entrance and the channel at West Wanganui. A by-law has been made providing that vessels must not use their propellers when turning at the Warkworth Wharf. This was necessary owing to the propellers forming a deep hole in the river at the wharf. The limits of the Port of Mōkau have been defined.

The sections of the Westport and Greymouth Harbour Board Acts which provide for a special rate of 3d. a ton on coal shipped at Westport and Greymouth have been brought into operation.

A return showing the harbour-works authorised by the Governor in Council, and the licenses issued for occupation of foreshore, is appended hereto.

The sum of £1,950 11s. 2d. has been collected for pilotage and port charges in respect of the harbours under the control of the Department. The amount collected during the previous year was £3,322 4s. 3d. The decrease is owing to Nelson Harbour now being under the control of a Harbour Board, which receives the pilotage and port charges collected at that port.

*Fisheries.*—Shipments of salmon-ova have been received from Canada and Great Britain. The shipment from Canada consisted of 500,000 sockeye or blueback ova, which were supplied without charge by the Canadian Fisheries Department. The ova were sent from Canada to San Francisco, in charge of one of the Canadian Fishery officers. At San Francisco they were taken charge of by Mr. G. H. Lambson, an officer of the United States Fish Commission, who brought them to New Zealand. The shipment arrived in bad condition, owing to the mode of packing not being suitable for long-distance carriage. Only 160,000 ova were good when unpacked, and there was a large percentage of deformed fish amongst those hatched out.

The ova from Great Britain came in two shipments—one of 150,000 by the "Gothic," and the other of 50,000 by the "Paparua." They yielded about 50 per cent. of good ova, but amongst the fish hatched out a considerable number were deformed.

The salmon at present in the hatchery at Hakataramea are as follow, viz.: Quinnot (seventeen months old), 20,000; sockeye or blueback (six months old), 20,000; Atlantic (*S. salar*)—"Gothic" shipment 51,200, "Paparua" 25,500.

During the year there have been liberated in the tributaries of the Waitaki River 23,600 yearling quinnot and 5,000 sockeye fry, and in the streams flowing into Lake Ohau 91,200 sockeye fry.

At the Hakataramea salmon-hatchery eight new rearing-ponds have been made, the race bringing the water for hatching purposes has been boxed from the springs to the hatching-shed, a high board fence has been erected round the ponds and buildings, a substantial wire fence has been erected round the reserve, a concrete floor has been put in the hatching-shed, and a tool-shed, workshop, cart-shed, and meat-house have been erected. Altogether, good progress has been made, and the Chief Inspector of Fisheries expresses himself well satisfied with the salmon-rearing experiments.

Inquiries have been made in Great Britain and the United States as to the possibility of bringing the spawn or live specimens of some of the best market fish of Europe and America to the colony, and the information obtained has been submitted to the Portobello Marine Fish Hatchery Board for its suggestions thereon.

The question of allowing trawling in the Hauraki Gulf and Frith of Thames was brought before Parliament last session, and the Chief Inspector of Fisheries was afterwards sent to Auckland and the Thames to make inquiries into the matter. He met persons interested and engaged in the fishing industry in both places, heard their statements, and submitted a report to the Department. After consideration of this report it was decided that for a time trawling should be prohibited in the Frith of Thames and in a portion of the gulf, and this has accordingly been done. The trawling industry at Napier has fallen off a good deal during the year, flounders not having been nearly so plentiful as formerly. H. C. Haywood, of Auckland, and Constable W. J. Campbell, of Wanganui, have been appointed Inspectors of Fisheries.

The close season for seals, which has been in force since October, 1894, has been extended up to the 30th June, 1903.

*Oysters.*—It has been decided to keep the beds in the Hauraki Gulf closed during the present season, as they have not yet recovered from the way in which they were depleted when last open; but it is anticipated that they will be in a proper condition for picking next season. The beds in