

1907.
NEW ZEALAND.

EXPERIMENTAL TRAWLING

(INTERIM REPORT ON).

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

SIR,—

Wellington, N.Z., 12th November, 1907.

I have the honour to present the following interim report on the fishing and deep-sea trawling cruise of the steam-trawler "Nora Niven," which was chartered by the Government for three months from the 5th June to the 4th September of this year for the purpose of prospecting certain parts of the sea off the east coast for fishing-grounds.

The object of the cruise was to test the ocean-floor off the east coast from Stewart Island to the Bay of Plenty and round the Chatham Islands, in order to ascertain what extent of clear trawling-grounds exist outside of those which are already known and worked; to ascertain what fish-life exists out to 100 fathoms; to look for offshore banks; and generally to acquire a better knowledge of our fishing resources.

The New Zealand Trawling and Fish Supply Company's new steam-trawler "Nora Niven" was chartered by the Government to carry out the work. This vessel, which arrived in the Dominion on the 7th May, was specially designed and built for the company by the Great Central Co-operative Engineering Company (Limited), Grimsby, England. The following is a description of the vessel: viz., length over all, 105 ft.; beam, 20 ft. 6 in.; draft, 13 ft. aft, 8 ft. forward; engines, triple expansion, 250-horse power; speed, 9 knots; fitted with a 4-ton Linde freezing-machine (marine type). There are two insulated holds capable of freezing and storing 50 tons of fish, and in one of these holds a strong iron brine-tank is placed, with moulds, where two tons of ice can be made in half-hundredweight blocks every twenty-four hours. The vessel has the most modern appliances and trawling-gear. The otter trawls can be worked from either side as necessity arises. The patent double-barrel steam-winch placed amidships carries 500 fathoms of 2 in. wire rope on each barrel, which enables the trawl-net to be worked to a depth of between 100 and 200 fathoms.

The "Nora Niven" proved to be a splendid sea-boat, and well adapted for the work she was employed to do for the Government. The owners were anxious to afford the Government officers on board every comfort that was possible on such a vessel and facility for carrying out the work successfully, and the officers and crew worked well throughout the cruise.

At the commencement of the cruise the "Nora Niven" had on board six complete trawl-nets and also some spare sections of net, three pairs of otter boards, spare rope, twine, shackles, chafing-gear, and other fittings; and also an outfit lining and an oyster-dredge. The spread of each of the trawl-nets was as follows: Foot-rope, 120 ft.; head-line, 80 ft.