

OTAGO TO LYTTTELTON.

Two trawlers from Port Chalmers are at present engaged in working the fishing-grounds off Otago Heads and in Blueskin Bay, and no attempt was therefore made to test these well-known grounds. Thirty hauls were made between Otago and Lyttelton. Almost every haul between Otago and Akaroa, inside about 40 fathoms, disclosed the presence of a great variety of fish. Foul ground exists to a distance of nine miles, and perhaps more, off Moeraki and Lookout Bluff, and, although fish appear to be plentiful, the ground is altogether unsuitable for trawling purposes, and is at present being worked by the line fishermen from Moeraki, the chief fish taken being blue-cod and hapuka.

The Canterbury Bight consists of such a vast extent of ideal trawling-ground that it was impossible during the present trip to make anything like as close a survey as is necessary, and I would strongly urge upon the Government that further tests should be made, preferably during the summer months. A month or more could be profitably spent in making a much closer survey, during which time it would be possible to maintain even soundings during each haul, and thus more fully prove its value. I feel quite confident that within this area the finest trawling-ground in New Zealand and some of the richest fishing-grounds will be found. Having such convenient ports of shelter as Oamaru, Timaru, and Akaroa, and being within easy reach of the chief centres by rail and steamer, increase its claim to further investigations. The bags taken off Akaroa were fairly large, but contained a great many elephant and other unsaleable fish, tarakihi being the chief edible fish taken. Soles, hapuka, and kingfish were also present, but were not taken in large numbers.

LYTTTELTON TO WELLINGTON.

The ground off Lyttelton was tested to a distance of fifty-eight miles east-north-east of Godley Head. Ninety-six fathoms was reached at a distance of twenty miles outside of the furthest soundings marked on the chart. Pegasus Bay, being frequently worked by the Lyttelton trawlers, did not come within the scope of the present survey. Twenty-three hauls were made between Lyttelton and Wellington. Large masses of jelly-fish were taken off Banks Peninsula and to the north of it in the shallower hauls, and as deeper water was approached the catch consisted mainly of elephant and other unsaleable fish. Flounders were taken up to 20 fathoms, beyond which the chief edible fish were tarakihi and gurnard, fair hauls of which were taken in from 30 to 45 fathoms. Two bad foulds were experienced twenty miles east of Motunau Island. These were due to the hard clay banks, which are very treacherous. One haul was made off Gore Bay, but produced only poor results. As a greater part of two trawls had been lost the previous day, no hauls were made between Kaikoura and Cape Campbell, but a zigzag course was made, and numerous soundings taken. Although small sandy patches may be found off the beaches on which trawling might be done, the soundings indicate uneven ground further off shore, evidently composed of reefs of rock, with stretches of very soft mud in between. The whole ground between Motunau Island and Cape Campbell is in all probability unsuitable for trawling purposes. Six hauls were made to the north-west of Cape Campbell in from 10 to 75 fathoms. Very few flat-fish were taken at this season, but tarakihi were plentiful in their favourite depth of about 30 fathoms. No hauls were made further in Cloudy Bay, as this is at present being worked. The deeper haul in mid strait from 38 to 75 fathoms produced very few edible fish and a number of large dogfish. The soundings given on the chart to the south-east of Cape Terawhiti indicate very great variations in depth, with steep drops of as much as 50 to 100 fathoms or more, and it is extremely unlikely that any stretch of trawling-ground exists in this locality.

WELLINGTON TO NAPIER.

Nineteen hauls were made between Wellington and Napier. A foul was experienced to the south-east of Sinclair Head, and the ground between there and Taurakirae is evidently rough. On the west side of Palliser Bay the water is very deep, but good trawling-ground was found towards the centre and east side of the bay, which was tested from 11 to 38 fathoms. Large soles were taken in 11 to 15 fathoms, and tarakihi, gurnard, and schnapper were taken at all depths. The prospects on the east side of the bay appear to be very good, and might conveniently be worked out of Wellington. No trawling was attempted between Cape Palliser and Castle Point, the chart showing deep soundings close inshore. Seven hauls were made between Castle Point and Cape Kidnappers. Two foulds were met with. Common and lemon soles, red-cod, schnapper, and tarakihi were taken at every haul, and might, I think, be expected in payable quantities; but the trawling-area is narrow. The richest portion appears to be between Bare Island and Cape Kidnappers, where the prospects are good once the foul ground has been located.

NAPIER TO EAST CAPE.

No trawling was done inside of a line drawn from Portland Island to Cape Kidnappers. Five hauls were made between here and Poverty Bay. Two hauls were made between 68 and 82 fathoms, which produced very considerable bags of tarakihi, also schnapper and kingfish, but not a single flat-fish of any description. Several hauls had been made previous to this by the "Nora Niven," and the results were the same as regards flat-fish. A considerable area of trawling-ground, about eight miles in width, extends from about six miles north of Table Cape to Poverty Bay, soles, gurnard, tarakihi, schnapper, and red-cod being taken on this ground in considerable quantities. Owing to a strong south-east gale no trawling was done between Aerial