

Reef and East Cape, and time did not permit of this portion being tested on the return trip. The soundings given on the chart give indications of even depth and a mud bottom, and I would recommend the owners of trawlers from Napier to give this portion a trial for schnapper and tarakihi. The ground close inshore is reefy, and the 20-fathom line is close inshore, so that the prospects of flat-fish are poor; but the catch of schnapper increases so remarkably a little to the south that it is extremely probable that this ground will prove as rich in schnapper, tarakihi, and other round fish as that found to the west of East Cape.

EAST CAPE TO AUCKLAND.

A series of hauls were made in the eastern portion of the Bay of Plenty, commencing about nine miles west of Cape Runaway, trawling in a south-westerly direction, on which course the depth of water decreased about 10 fathoms per haul. The whole of the first haul was made in over 100 fathoms, and resulted in the capture of a large number of tarakihi and a few other fish. Subsequent hauls each yielded a heavier bag of tarakihi and schnapper, with a few John-dory, kingfish, hapuka, &c. Soles were taken in the largest numbers in about 20 fathoms; the largest bags of schnapper and tarakihi were taken at about 30 fathoms, at which depth upwards of a ton of fish can be taken per hour. Very few unsaleable fish were taken in this region. A number of hauls were taken here on the return journey, and the result proved to be just the same. No hauls were made between Whale Island and Motiti Island, where numerous rock soundings are shown, and there are a number of shoals and reefs. Two hauls were made to the north-west of Tauranga in from 9 to 21 fathoms, but at this season the catch of schnapper was very poor compared with the same depth further to the east. A few soles, John-dory, and gurnard were also taken here, and the probability is that good results are to be had here at certain seasons. The bottom is of coarse sand and quartz crystals. Two hauls were also made to the west of Mayor Island in 33 to 50 fathoms, but results were very poor. The nature of the bottom is somewhat similar to that on the east side of the Bay of Plenty, but the net had a most unpleasant smell when hauled in, with a slimy substance adhering to it, and to which may possibly be attributed the scarcity of fish.

CHATHAM ISLANDS.

The orders in regard to the Chatham Islands were: "To see what the ground was like for trawling, and to test the blue-cod fishing with lines." Contrary to expectations, a very considerable area of good trawling-ground was found. All soundings in and to the south of Petre Bay, through Pitt Strait, and in Hanson Bay showed yellow sand. Very few soundings are given on the chart anywhere around the island, but time and weather did not permit of a complete trawling and sounding circuit of the island being made on this occasion. No blue-cod were taken in the trawl, thus further indicating the absence of reefs near where trawling was done. Seven hauls of the trawl were made, the kinds of fish taken being somewhat similar, depth for depth, to those captured along the east coast of the South Island, and there is every prospect of greatly increased hauls when fishing for commercial purposes. Wherever the lines were put down large catches of blue-cod were made. Almost all were of exceptionally large size, particularly those taken off Rabbit Island and West Reef, where strong tides are experienced. Two and three blue-cod and hapuka were usually pulled up as soon as the line touched the bottom, and it was a sight to see the boats returning after a couple of hours' fishing loaded to the gunwale with blue-cod. Four Pitt-Islanders caught 230 of the largest blue-cod I have ever seen in less than an hour and a half's fishing off the north-west corner of Pitt Island. Six of the crew caught 606 blue-cod and 103 large hapuka, 1 trumpeter, and 1 yellowtail in seven hours off Whangaroa, and on another occasion caught 860 blue-cod in three hours and a half. Almost all the men were inexperienced in the art of blue-cod fishing, making the catch all the more remarkable. It is extremely probable that the Chatham Islands will in the near future become one of the most important sources of our fish-supply. These results may not be obtained throughout the year, but even if they are only to be had in the winter-time these Islands would prove most welcome at that season, during which fish are generally scarce around our own coast. The following additional particulars may be of benefit to those who wish to extend their operations to these Islands. The distance from Lyttelton and Wellington is about equal, being 420 miles, and from Napier about 386 miles, or about two days' steaming from any of these ports. The coast-line of the Islands, including Pitt Island, is about two hundred miles in extent, and is much indented. The greater portion of this is rocky, and with overlying reefs in many places. Blue-cod are reported to be as plentiful all round the Islands as in places tested by us. There are a number of anchorages in which shelter can be obtained during certain winds, but the only safe one during all weathers is at Whangaroa, or Port Hutt. The harbour is only small (see chart), but the anchorage is good, and it is an ideal place for the erection of a movable freezing-plant and the establishment of a fishing-station. There is no bar, a thick patch of kelp extending almost across the entrance to the harbour. There are two sandy beaches for beaching boats, &c., within the harbour. The population of the Islands is about three hundred, the majority of whom are Maoris. There are two hotels at Waitangi. Communication with Lyttelton is bi-monthly in the winter, but more frequent trips are made in the summer-time. Several small shipments of blue-cod, packed in ice, have been sent to Lyttelton, but the service is not at present sufficiently frequent to carry on a regular trade in fish.