

The trawler "Energy" has fished for the greater part of the year from Wellington, principally in Cloudy Bay. The steam trawlers "Nora Niven" and "Countess" have lately come down from Napier and have fished the grounds in Palliser Bay, Tasman and Golden Bays, and off Kapiti Island.

*Wellington Municipal Fish-market.*—The market was opened on the 4th October last, and since that date about 40 tons of fish, consisting of all the principal market varieties, has been received and disposed of. The object of the market is to allow the fishermen to deal directly with the consumer. The manager states, however, that so far it has not received the support of the small fishermen that it deserves. The Municipality merely receives and sells the fish sent in, charging 10 per cent. commission on sales. It does not purchase any fish, and accepts no responsibility. The uncertainty of the supply of fish which has so far come forward has no doubt prevented the public from patronizing the market as well as they otherwise would have done.

*Nelson.*—The fishing during the past year has been better than for several previous seasons, the supply obtained during the winter months being particularly good. After supplying the local requirement most of the surplus fish is sent down the west coast to Westport, Greymouth, and Hokitika.

*Westport.*—The run of whitebait in the Buller River last season is reported to have been particularly good, but the catches of other market fish have shown a considerable falling-off.

*Marlborough Sounds and South Coast of Cook Strait.*—These fisheries continue to supply a large quantity of the fish required for the Wellington market. During the past twelve months fair catches have been made, and the total quantity shipped to Wellington has been rather better than during the two previous seasons. Fishermen complain of the decrease of fish in certain parts of the Sounds, and most of the fish is now caught out in the Strait. The principal fish caught are blue cod, hapuku, moki, garfish, tarakihi, butterfish, warehou, flounders, and herrings. Some very good catches of blue cod have been made, and the fish all the season have been in excellent condition.

*Canterbury District.*—Owing to frequent floods in the Waimakariri River, the run of whitebait was unusually poor last season. On the other hand, in the smaller rivers which are not snow-fed the run was exceptionally good. The supply of sea-fish from the local grounds has been unsteady, caused, no doubt, by the frequent gales which have been experienced during the year. The fish-supply at the Christchurch market has in the aggregate been equal to the previous years, but it has been unsteady, no doubt due to the unfavourable weather, which prevented fishermen, sometimes for more than a week at a time, from going out. A large quantity of the fish-supply for the Christchurch market is now obtained from Timaru. The quantity brought into this port during the year has shown a steady increase.

There are now eighteen large oil-launches and one steam trawler working from Timaru. Several of the larger launches are fitted with the Otter trawling-gear and are able to work successfully on the same ground as the steam trawler. Hapuku, flounders, soles, tarakihi, ling, kingfish, and red cod are the principal fish taken.

*Otago District.*—From information received from fishermen at the various fishing-places along the coast, the quantity of fish landed during the year ended 31st March last has been quite equal to what was marketed in 1910–11.

The information I got from fishermen at Oamaru was to the effect that the season had been noted for strong winds and stormy weather, but, notwithstanding this, the total quantity of fish brought in was about the average for this port.

At Moeraki fair catches were made of all kinds of fish when the weather-conditions were favourable. During the winter some exceptional hauls of hapuku were made well off shore in from 50 to 90 fathoms. On the whole the season has been an average one. Here as well as at Oamaru fishermen complain of the high price of benzene, which has increased the cost of running their boats, and prevents them taking any risk in looking for new fishing-grounds. During the year the Dunedin market has been well supplied with flat fish, and a fair supply of all other kinds has come forward. Most of the fish-salesmen, however, state that the supply all round has not been equal to the demand.

At Nugget Bay the fishermen report that fishing on the inshore grounds has been rather poor, but further off in the deeper water the catches were quite equal to other years. Hapuku is the principal fish taken. The boat-landing at this bay is considered by fishermen to be anything but a safe one, and boats caught out in an east, north-east, or northerly gale have to take great risks in getting in. An extension of the groyne or breakwater to the outer reef would undoubtedly effect a great improvement and make it as safe as it is possible to be, and I would recommend that an estimate of the cost of making this extension should be obtained with a view to having this work done.

*Chatham Islands.*—The two Wellington fishing companies have continued operations during the year. The bad weather which prevailed throughout the year very much hindered the fishing, and on that account it has not been nearly as profitable for the fishermen and the companies as it otherwise would have been. Whenever the weather was favourable very good catches of blue cod and other fish were made.

*Southland District.*—During the year it may be said that blue cod have been plentiful, and in fine weather some exceptional catches have been made. The fish, too, have been in excellent condition. In February I visited Stewart Island and went out with a party of fishermen on to the fishing-grounds in Foveaux Strait. The weather was fine and good catches were made by all the boats, and I was very pleased with the quantity and quality of fish caught.