

*Kaikoura*.—The usual market fish caught here have been plentiful throughout the year, and large consignments have been sent to Wellington and Christchurch markets, and in favourable weather landed in good condition. With cool storage and ice-making plant and a better transport service the Kaikoura fishing-grounds could supply the markets of these two cities with a large and regular supply of the finest market fish. Fishermen could fish every day when the weather would let them, and with the certainty that every fish they caught would arrive at the market in good condition and realize the highest market price. As things are at present they can only fish part of their time, and it is only in the winter months that there is any certainty of their catches arriving at Wellington and Christchurch in a marketable condition.

*Marlborough Sounds*.—The output of fish during the year has been quite up to the average of other seasons. Unfavourable weather through the winter and spring interfered somewhat with fishing operations, but when the weather was favourable good catches were made, particularly through the summer and autumn. The principal fish sent to market are hapuku, blue cod, moki, tarakihi, warehou, herrings, and flounders. The launches trawling in Cloudy Bay have had a successful season.

*Nelson*.—During the year the market has been well supplied with hapuku, hake, flounders, schnapper, butterfish, red cod, and gurnard. No exceptional catches have been reported, but a fairly regular supply has been maintained. Besides supplying the local market and inland districts, considerable quantities are shipped to the towns on the west coast as far south as Hokitika.

*Wellington*.—This season the catches of groper on the local grounds have been exceptionally good. The warehou season has also been an exceptionally good one. Fish salesmen say that for the quantity and quality of the fish it is one of the best warehou seasons they have known. The supply of other fish from the local fishing-grounds has been about the average of other seasons.

The Municipal Fish-market continues to be well patronized by the public. The quantity of fish passed through shows a considerable increase on the previous year. As in all cities, an occasional short supply of fish has to be experienced, but, taking the year through, the supply coming forward to the Wellington market has been well maintained. For some time during the year the steam trawlers "Nora Niven" and "Countess" worked on the trawling-grounds in Cook Strait and Palliser Bay. The "Nora Niven" worked for a time on the west coast north of Waitara, and was successful in getting good catches of fish, principally schnapper, tarakihi, gurnard, soles, and flounders.

*Napier*.—Very fair hauls of fish were made by the trawlers on the Hawke's Bay trawling-grounds up to the end of the year; since then the catches have been rather poor, and said to be considerably below the average of the two previous seasons for the same period. The two larger trawlers, the "Nora Niven" and "Countess," have, as usual, worked farther out in water from 20 to 40 fathoms, getting fair catches of round fish such as schnapper, kingfish, tarakihi, &c. Lately very good hauls are reported from the grounds to the north of the Mahia Peninsula and off Tolaga Bay. The catches by the seine-net fishermen have been about the average of other years.

*Auckland*.—Inspector Bennett reports that the market has been generally well supplied with fish during the past year. Schnapper, he says, are decreasing in quantity on the old fishing-grounds near Auckland, but on the grounds farther out in the neighbourhood of the Barrier Islands, Mokohinou, and Hen and Chickens they are found in abundance. He reports that mullet are becoming scarcer every year, and recommends a close season extending over a number of years in the Hauraki Gulf. Flounders have been taken in fairly large quantities by net fishermen. Trevalli, tarakihi, john-dory, and hapuku are plentiful on the fishing-grounds in the Hauraki Gulf and on the outside grounds.

The Hauraki Gulf and Great Barrier oyster-beds are in first-rate condition, and are being extended every year by the replanting areas which were depleted some years ago under the old system of licensed picking. Last picking season a total of 4,042 sacks were taken off these beds. Of these, 2,049 were taken from Waiheke Island, 791 from Mahurangi, 750 from Maeritai, 350 from Rangitoto, and 102 from Tiritiri Island.

I made an inspection of the beds in Hauraki Gulf some time after the closing of the picking season, and I found that the beds had been left in a very satisfactory condition, and would all yield a good supply for the next season.

The supply of first-class oysters available last season considerably exceeded the demand, for at the close of the season there was a considerable extent of the best beds in the Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Islands which had not been touched and from which about 5,000 sacks could have been taken if required. This must be considered very satisfactory indeed, and proof that the Department's system of picking and protection has been a complete success. This opinion is endorsed by Professor Prince in his report. In speaking about our rock-oyster beds and system of picking he says, "I had every reason when visiting the northern oyster-beds to conclude that the system of Government supervision carried out in the Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Islands has been the best possible. It has saved these beds from destruction, otherwise they would by this time have probably been entirely cleaned out. Two main objects have thus been accomplished—namely, the beds have not only been preserved, but rendered far more productive; and, secondly, the public have been able to obtain ample supplies at a reasonable rate."

The beds which were replanted on the Coromandel coast and islands in the Thames Gulf are improving very satisfactorily. Young oysters are showing up along the foreshore wherever "plants" of brood oysters were made. This season some more replanting was done on several of the islands. Valuable work in extending the beds was also done on Pakihi Island and in Port Fitzroy Harbour, Great Barrier, by removing high-water rock down to the oyster-line and filling in bare spaces between oyster-beds in the bays.

*Thames*.—The Inspector reports that fish have been plentiful on the Thames fishing-grounds during the year, and good catches have been made. There are forty launches and about ninety men employed catching fish. There are three fish-freezing works and cleaning and packing sheds. Most of the fish