

As previous years had shown that very large numbers of salmon went up the Waitaki and Rangitata Rivers it was decided to allow anglers to fish for them in those rivers last season, and the Department made arrangements to net the fish outside the rivers, but, unfortunately, owing to the weather being bad and the rivers being frequently flooded and fewer fish going up, both the angling and netting proved a failure.

A report by Mr. L. F. Ayson, Chief Inspector of Fisheries, on the fisheries of the Dominion is appended, as is also a return of registered fishing-boats licensed at the various ports during the year ended the 31st December, 1917.

The following proceedings have been taken for breaches of the Fisheries Act, viz.: Master of trawler "Muriel," for trawling within prohibited limits—fined £5 and costs (vessel, which was forfeited for the offence, was returned on payment of £100); N. Fagan, for illegally taking oysters—fined £3 and costs; Mrs. Wrigley, for illegally taking oysters—convicted and ordered to pay costs; P. Garea, for being in possession of oysters in close season—fined £2 and costs; W. Pateman and F. Kendall, each fined 10s. and ordered to pay 7s. costs, and C. Weston, convicted and ordered to pay 7s. costs, for using unlicensed fishing-boats; S. Lee, for illegally taking oysters—fined £5 and costs; H. Hayward, M. Hayward, and J. Duffy, for stalling—each fined £1 and costs (forfeited nets were returned on payment of £5).

#### *Meteorological and Weather Office.*

The following is the report of the Rev. Mr. Bates, Director of the Meteorological Office:—

"There has been no change in the office during the past year, and Mr. Athol Stretton is still with the Forces in France.

"The usual routine of forecasting and climatological work has been carried out, and annual and monthly statistics published as formerly; but it is desirable to embody the results of previous years in a single publication.

"There have been one or two rather serious breaks in the records at our chief stations, and some of the rainfall observations have been irregular on account of the exigencies of the war. The value of these records greatly depends upon their continuity, and as our observers are nearly all voluntary it is desirable that some form of recognition should be made by the presentation of books or instruments to faithful volunteers.

"The majority of our records are naturally in more settled districts near the coast, but we need more inland records, especially at high-level places near the sources of the chief rivers. This would enable us to get observations of snow conditions on the mountains, upon which so much depends for irrigation, floods, &c.

"Inspection of stations has been curtailed on account of expense and shortage of staff. On account of the difficulty of obtaining new instruments the utmost care has been exercised over issues in the place of broken and old instruments.

"New climatological stations have been established at Trentham and Featherston Military Camps at the request of Surgeon-General Henderson, and satisfactory results have been obtained. A new station has also been established at Kisselton, Lake Coleridge, in connection with the electrical water-power scheme; and another station also at Brightwater, near Nelson.

"Wireless reports have been received regularly from Chatham Islands, and the information has been cabled daily to Australia with other information from New Zealand.

"The most unusual feature observed in the weather through the year has been the large number of ex-tropical disturbances, which have brought heavy rainfall in the northern parts of New Zealand, while westerly disturbances have been less frequent."

#### *Inspection of Machinery.*

A full report by the Chief Inspector on the work connected with the inspections during the year is appended.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE ALLPORT, Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister of Marine, Wellington.

The CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FISHERIES to the SECRETARY, MARINE DEPARTMENT.

SIR,—

Wellington, 26th July, 1918.

I have the honour to present the following report on the fisheries for the year ended 31st March, 1918.

During the year I visited the following fishing ports and stations, viz.: Riverton, Bluff, Nugget Bay, Port Chalmers, Moeraki, Oamaru, Timaru, Lyttelton, Kaiapoi, Picton, Marlborough Sounds, Cook Strait, Napier, Hauraki Gulf, Great Barrier, Whangarei, Bay of Islands, and Kaipara. I assisted with the erection of a salmon-hatchery at Pembroke for the purpose of stocking the Molyneux with salmon. As sufficient skilled assistance was not available I again assisted with the collection of salmon-eggs at the Dobson River, and I also personally liberated the salmon-fry hatched out at the Kokotahi, Maori Creek (Wairau), and Pembroke Hatcheries.

From the information contained in the reports supplied by the Inspectors of Fisheries it would seem that generally fish have been plentiful on the fishing-grounds, and that the shortage of fish at times was principally due to unfavourable weather conditions preventing fishermen from working. A continuation of strong easterly winds along the east coast greatly interfered with fishing during the end of summer and through the autumn months. Fishermen lost a great deal of time, and the markets were short of fish.