

*Waitangi Harbour, Chatham Islands.*—A number of requests for improved harbour facilities at Waitangi having been received, arrangements were made to visit these islands and report on the position generally.

Surveys were made, and the various propositions put forward investigated. The present wharf is unsatisfactory in that the depth of water is insufficient at low tide for the boats lightering cargo from the steamers. This state of affairs can be improved by extending the wharf and deepening the channel, but not sufficiently to enable steamers to unload direct. It is naturally desired by the residents to have a wharf at which small steamers could lie while loading and unloading, and it has been proposed that a small breakwater be constructed. Unfortunately, this would be a fairly expensive undertaking, and the present volume of trade is not sufficient to justify it. There is at present no local authority with power to control and finance any improvement scheme and until such is established matters are not likely to improve to any great extent. A movement is now in progress to form a County Council, which could also act as a Harbour Board and attend to such matters.

*Bruce Bay.*—The crane landing and approach bridge at the Flowerpot Rock has been completed and is in operation. Considerable difficulty was experienced in erecting some of the piers, owing to very heavy weather when the concrete bases were being set. Loading and unloading can now be satisfactorily carried out here.

*Kaipara Beacons.*—These have been repaired, and arrangements made for protection work to be carried out at the North Head to guard against the sand erosion.

*Tryphena Wharf, Great Barrier Island.*—A very full investigation has been made to ascertain the best locality in which to erect this wharf. A subsidy has been provided by the Government, and immediately the site is definitely decided the work can proceed.

*General repair and maintenance works* were carried out at the various small harbours under the control of this Department, and regular surveys have been made, and complete records are being obtained of the various changes which have taken place at the Wairau bar.

As usual, a number of applications have been received from local bodies and private individuals for the approval of works involving marine interests. These have all been carefully investigated, and, where desirable, approved. Some of the principal items were:—

Wharves: Onekaka; Otanerau; Queen Charlotte Sound; Nelson Street Jetty, Auckland; Hicks Bay; Kutarere, North Auckland; Endeavour Inlet; Maori Beach, Stewart Island; Wairoa River; Warkworth Harbour; Hokianga Harbour; Whanaki, Whangarei; Pakawa Estuary; Nelson Electric Lines and Power House; Kennedy Bay.

Foreshore Leases: Heathcote Estuary; Mongonui; Mercury Island; Hokianga Fore-shore; Paremata, Purakunui; Stewart Island.

Harbour-works: Gisborne; Hicks Bay; Bluff; Castlecliff; New Plymouth.

#### WESTPORT HARBOUR.

During the year 543 steamers and seven sailing-vessels entered the port, aggregating 275,765 tons register, as against 546 steamers and seven sailing-vessels (332,401 tons register) for the previous year—a decrease of three vessels and 56,636 tons register. Coal export amounted to 439,707 tons, as against 572,342 tons for the previous year—a decrease of 132,635 tons. The decrease in shipping and coal-export is accounted for by the stoppage at the Westport Coal Company's and Westport-Stockton Coal Company's mines from the 13th September, 1923, to the 10th January, 1924; during that period only coal won from the co-operative parties' mines was available for shipment.

The average depth on the bar was 23 ft. 2 in., as against 25 ft. 1 in. The decreased average depth was due to the fact that the dredge "Eileen Ward" was laid up from the 29th August to the 13th January, 1924, there being no large vessels visiting the port during that period. The average depth in river fairway at high water from Crane Wharf to bar was 27 ft. 5 in., as against 28 ft. last year.

The dredge "Eileen Ward" worked on 116 days and removed 367,600 cubic yards of sand from the entrance at a cost of £10,124 10s. 9d., which includes £3,831 for overhead charges. She left for overhaul on the patent slip at Wellington on the 1st September, 1923, and returned to Westport on the 13th September and was then laid up until the 13th January. The dredge "Mawhera" was hired from the Greymouth Harbour Board from the 19th June to the 19th August, at a cost of £2,909 17s. 8d., for the purpose of improving the berthage area. The dredges "Rubi Seddon" and "Erskine" have not been in commission during the year.

The tug "Mana" was placed on the grid for cleaning, painting, and survey during February. Six vessels were towed outwards during the year.

The Priestman grab has been in commission on several occasions to remove snags from the fairway.

A complete survey of the roadstead was made during the year and soundings plotted regularly.

The largest vessel which visited the port was the R.A.F.A. "Biloela," of 3,366 tons net and 5,596 tons gross register.

The consultative committee met twice during the year.

The total staff employed on the 31st March, 1924, was thirty-nine, as against forty-one on the 1st April, 1923—a reduction of two.

The dredges "Rubi Seddon" and "Erskine," and the hoppers "Heathcote" and "Sumner," are laid up. Several attempts have been made to dispose of them, but so far without success.

#### SHINGLE AND SAND BEACHES AND FORESHORES.

The question of control of these areas has been given attention during the year, and steps continue to be taken to place effective supervision over the removal of material from, and the construction of wharves and other structures on, these areas. A good deal of ignorance in respect to the provisions of the Harbours Act, both concerning the removal of sand, shells, gravel, &c., and the erection of structures on foreshores, has manifested itself, and a policy of appointing honorary Inspectors of Beaches is in operation.