

Department to draw on the Consolidated Fund, if necessary, the Department could not reasonably make such application in view of the present condition of that fund. In any case, the existing facilities are capable of handling at least 50 per cent. more coal than is being mined at present, and there is no indication that the output is likely to increase even if further facilities were afforded. No good purpose is served in providing for more shipping and larger vessels, when there are plenty calling now to cope with the present output.

Another factor which has a direct bearing on the complaints which have been made is the attempt to work the harbour with vessels of a draught requiring a depth on the bar which, though it may be obtained when all conditions are favourable, cannot possibly be assured under unfavourable conditions. In 1910, when the export of coal was 800,000 tons, the average net tonnage of vessels visiting the port was 575, whereas in 1929 the average net tonnage was 850, and the export of coal 625,835. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that the use of means of power-production other than coal is greatly on the increase. Even in the districts of the Buller and Grey Coalfields considerable hydro-electric undertakings are in hand where local coal could be used, and possibly more profitably used, for the production of power.

The position generally in regard to the entrance to this harbour has not been satisfactory recently, although the suction dredge "Eileen Ward" has been employed continuously on the bar at every available opportunity, and the bucket dredge "Maui" also has been continuously employed. The cause of the trouble is due partly to the gradual accumulation of detritus adjacent to the breakwater, and partly to the phenomenal dry spell of weather in the latter half of the year, keeping the natural flow of the Buller River at an unusually low ebb.

The whole question of maintaining a satisfactory depth of water on the bar has been thoroughly investigated, and the decision has been reached that the only effective method of remedying the position is to extend the breakwaters so that the influence of the river when in fresh may be extended to the bar. No amount of dredging, within economic and practical limits will have the desired effect if weather conditions are adverse.

The extension of the breakwaters was commenced during the year, and this work is being pushed forward as expeditiously as possible.

The bucket dredge "Maui" which was purchased by the Department from the Gisborne Harbour Board in September, 1929, has been engaged for the greater part of the year in the fairway and at the berthages. It takes this vessel all her time to cope with these two areas, as it is found that siltation is now taking place at a greater rate than previously, a condition which is attributed to the following causes: (1) The land-slides caused by the severe earthquake in June, 1929; (2) the spoil being dumped into the river from the new railway works and in connection with road-restoration.

The track to Organ's Island has been repaired to enable a further extension of the protective wall to be carried out, and 1,969 tons of stone were deposited at McPadden's. The fencing of the willow reserve at Hanna's was completed. The willows planted in this reserve are doing well, and should now be able to withstand any reasonable flood.

The new pilot-launch, which was specially designed for the harbour-work at Westport, was delivered in July, 1929. This vessel has proved an excellent pilot-boat, being capable of crossing the bar in all weathers.

The electric coal-loading crane, which arrived in June, 1929, was recently put into commission, and is a first-class machine. Coal can be loaded without difficulty at any state of the tide into any vessel visiting the port. It is understood that there is some fault in the supply of power, but doubtless this will be overcome.

Additional equipment has been provided at the workshops, and the plant generally has been well maintained.

G. C. GODFREY, Secretary.

## FISHERIES.

SIR,—

8th August, 1930.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st March, 1930.

Returns from the various fishing centres have been collected as usual, and assembled in statistical form (see Tables I and II).

By summarizing this information the total amount of wet fish landed in the Dominion for the year is shown to be 367,647 cwt., valued at £449,440.

The value of the total yield of the shell-fisheries amounted to £38,663, made up as follows:—

						Value.
						£
Dredge oysters	..	..	..	..	39,331 sacks	24,582
Rock-oysters	..	..	..	..	6,219 sacks	7,152
Mussels	..	..	..	..	9,037 sacks	2,833
Crayfish*	..	..	..	2,047 cwt. =	2,675 sacks	4,096

Separate returns of landings of mussels and crayfish were unobtainable for some of the ports, so that the figures for these kinds are incomplete.

Products to the value of £8,901 were obtained from the whaling operations in New Zealand coastal waters.

\* Crayfish returns have been reduced to a common denominator by using the following equivalents: 1 sack = 5 dozen = 85.7 lb.; 1 case (double benzine-box) = 3½ dozen = 60 lb.