

The following summary table shows the quantities and values of various classes of fish and shell-fish exported from New Zealand during both the past year (1930-31) and the preceding year (1929-30), and the differences between the two years.

	Year 1930-31.		Year 1929-30.		Decrease (—) or Increase (+) in 1930-31 compared with Previous Year.	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
Frozen fish	17,678 cwt.	£ 47,047	22,760 cwt.	£ 64,772	—5,082 cwt.	—17,725
Fish, smoked, dried, pickled, or salted	1,128 cwt.	3,744	414 cwt.	1,208	+714 cwt.	+2,536
Potted and preserved in tins—						
Oysters	15,079 lb.	1,207	20,316 lb.	1,701	—5,237 lb.	—494
Other kinds	87,063 lb.	8,674	109,172 lb.	14,575	—22,109 lb.	—5,901
Value of total exports ..	..	60,072	..	82,256	..	—22,184

With regard to frozen fish, tinned fish, and tinned shell-fish, these differences represent substantial decreases in both quantity and value. The decreases may be ascribed to the economic depression in Australia, which is practically our only customer for frozen fish and by far the most important market for the other classes of export.

The decreased purchasing-power of fish-consumers in New Zealand and Australia under the now existing economic conditions will undoubtedly result in a marked diminution in fish-landings, and a still more marked drop in values, for next year. In some cases the voluntary restriction of fishing operations in accordance with diminished demand may be beneficial to fish stocks now in danger of depletion. But, on the other hand, there is the disturbing prospect that the industry, already prevented by lack of adequate capital from operating with the efficiency that is desirable, will suffer a setback that will keep us tied still longer to the obsolete or obsolescent methods in the catching, marketing, and distribution of fish which now prevail in the Dominion. What can be done about it is too complicated a question for present discussion. I hope to make some remarks on the fisheries in relation to national economy in a further section or appendix to this report.

ROCK-OYSTERS.

Oyster-picking for the 1930 season was commenced on the 11th June and finished on the 17th September. Forty-five men were employed on the beds. The number of sacks of oysters taken from the different areas was as follows: Bay of Islands, 2,522; Kaipara, 699; Hauraki Gulf, 1,109 (Takatu to Gull Point, 437; South Shore, Tamaki Strait, 70; Kawau, 20; Motutapu, 202; Motuihi, 99; Waiheke, 58; Ponui, 156; Pakihi, 53; Crusoe Island, 14); Coromandel, 309; Great Barrier Island, 576: total, 5,215 sacks; value, £6,258.

The beds on the islands in the Gulf and on the Coromandel side were lightly picked in view of the fact that the “spatting” (reproduction) has been deficient of recent years on these shores. The market demand was not so keen as the previous year, owing, doubtless, to diminished purchasing-power among the general public.

OYSTER-CULTIVATION.

The cultivation work carried out during the year consisted principally in the collection and destruction of “borers.” A total of over nine millions of these oyster-pests was disposed of. This work is now done in the winter months, since it has been discovered (see report for 1928-29, p. 19) that this mollusc spawns in the spring. The former plan of collecting borers from October to January merely removed the adults after they had left behind a new generation. When possible, the collection of borers was paid for at a piecework rate of 1s. per thousand. The effects of the persistent borer-destruction of the last three years is now very apparent on most of the oyster-shores, but the quantities are still great in the Kaipara and on some of the Coromandel beds. With regard to the former areas, where the reproduction of oysters is fairly copious and regular, the losses by borer-attack are of no great consequence and may even result in a certain amount of beneficial “thinning,” but on the sparsely stocked Coromandel beds the effects of the borer pest are serious. The most important of the other cultivation work was the moving-down of high oyster-bearing rock to the level of optimum growth. The details are summarized in the table which follows.

Area.	Number of “Borers” destroyed.	High-water Oyster-rock removed.	Other Work.	Cost.
		Sq. yds.		£ s. d.
I. Bay of Islands	632,850	..	3,190 “pupu” destroyed	75 14 2
II. Whangarei Harbour ..	113,975	670	989 “pupu” destroyed; 130 yds. of new rock walls; 120 yds. of rock cleaned from shell and 125 yds. from weed	25 6 8
III. Kaipara Harbour ..	3,929,700	..	..	196 9 0
IV. Takatu to Gull Point (including Mahurangi Harbour)	1,475,150	45	1,587 “pupu” destroyed; 390 yds. rock cleaned from old shell	65 17 0
VI. Coromandel coast ..	1,400,000	..	..	70 0 0
VII. Kawau	641,800	..	244 “pupu” destroyed	31 3 0
XIII. Waiheke	278,000	..	450 “pupu” destroyed	19 6 8
XIV. Ponui	101,000	..	224 “pupu” destroyed	6 12 4
XVI. Great Barrier Island ..	503,400	..	..	25 3 6
Totals	9,075,875	715		515 12 3