

1885.

NEW ZEALAND.

MARINE DEPARTMENT

(ANNUAL REPORT OF THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 28th May, 1885.

I do myself the honour to submit the following report of this department for the year ended on the 31st March last:—

LIGHTHOUSES, ETC.—The various lighthouses on the coast of New Zealand under the control of this department, now amounting to twenty-nine, have been kept in good order during the past year. A slight accident occurred at Portland Island, which prevented the machinery from working; the acting principal keeper telegraphed to Wellington for assistance as soon as possible; in the meantime the light was caused to revolve by means of the hand-gear. On receipt of the telegram the “Stella” was at once despatched to Portland Island, and repairs were executed. It is to be noted that two steamers passed close to Portland Island in daylight, when signals for assistance were flying from the lighthouse flagstaff, but no notice was taken of them, nor was the circumstance reported to this office. At Cape Campbell the end of the winding-shaft broke off, rendering it necessary to work the light by hand until the morning, when the end of the shaft was reduced to suit the handle, and has since worked all right. During the year one principal keeper was reduced to the rank of assistant keeper; one assistant keeper was dismissed, he being the keeper referred to in last report as having gone to sleep on watch; the services of one keeper were dispensed with on the ground of ill-health; one keeper was paid off; one probationary keeper was not confirmed in his appointment; and five assistant keepers resigned their appointments: eleven keepers were appointed on probation during the same period.

Kaipara Heads.—The works in connection with this lighthouse were so far advanced as to enable the light to be exhibited on the 1st December last. The light is a ten-second flashing white light of the second order dioptric.

Bean Rock.—The stonework that protects the foundation of this lighthouse was damaged by the easterly gale in March last. It has since been repaired.

French Pass.—This light was first exhibited on the 1st October last. It was found practicable, in addition to the fixed red light on the mainland, to show a white light from the beacon on the reef by means of an ordinary ship's riding-light, with an enlarged reservoir, so that it will burn, if necessary, for two or three days. It has to be kept burning night and day as the beacon can only be visited at slack-water. Of course, if the light should go out during the night, it will not, as a rule, be possible to re-light it; as yet this has only occurred twice, namely, on the 8th January, when the light on the beacon was out from 10 p.m. to 6.30 a.m. on the 9th, and on the 27th January, when the light was out from 6 to 8 p.m. In the Notice to Mariners respecting this light special attention was drawn to the fact that it was not implicitly to be relied on. A supply of a superior description of riding-lights has been since received from England, and it is anticipated that by using one of these the light will not be liable to go out. On the 20th January the schooner “Reward” ran into the beacon, damaging it and completely smashing the lamp.

Light at the Eastern Entrance to Hauraki Gulf.—A survey of the best position for this light was made by the Marine Engineer (Mr. Blackett) and Captain Johnson; they reported in favour of the site on Cuvier Island, as being better than that on Red Mercury Island. No further action has been taken in the matter beyond preliminary steps to acquire the land.

Dog Island.—A new oil-store has been built at this station by the keepers.

Cape Foulwind.—The tower has been thoroughly overhauled, and some decayed portions have been renewed.