

SESS. II.—1891.
NEW ZEALAND.

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

(ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1890-91.)

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

MY LORD,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 31st August, 1891.

I do myself the honour to transmit herewith, for your Excellency's information, the report of the Marine Department of this colony for the financial year ended on the 31st March last.

I have, &c.,

JOHN MCKENZIE,

(for Minister having charge of the Marine Department.)

His Excellency the Right Honourable the Earl of Onslow, &c.,
Governor of New Zealand.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY to the Hon. the MINISTER having charge of the MARINE DEPARTMENT.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 1st June, 1891.

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

Lighthouses.—No accident of any importance occurred during the past year at any of the New Zealand lighthouses. At Taiaroa Head a heavy squall caused the tower door to fly open and extinguished the light, which was, however, relighted immediately. Cuvier Island Lighthouse was struck by lightning, the wires of the electric-bells being fused, but fortunately little damage was done. French Pass Beacon Light was reported by the keeper in charge to have been blown out on seven occasions—viz., on 8th April, from 5.30 a.m. to 7 a.m.; on 4th May, from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.; on the 5th and on the 27th May, from 7 to 7.30 p.m.; on 27th June, from 7 to 7.30 p.m.; on 6th July, from 3 to 4 p.m.; on 19th July, from 9 to 9.15 p.m.; and on 10th October, from 3 to 4.30 a.m. At Manakau Head several panes of glass that were cracked in the lantern were removed and replaced by sound ones. At Puysegur Point the keepers' dwellings were repaired, new weather boards being fitted on the ends of the houses exposed to the prevailing winds. Repairs will require to be done to several lighthouses during the current year. Nugget Point requires new dormant panes, and repairs of an extensive character will be required at Farewell Spit. Two lightkeepers left the service during the year, one having retired on a pension and the other having resigned.

New Lighthouses.—An examination of the site for a light on Stephen's Island was made by Captain Johnson in December last, but no definite site could be selected until some scrub had been cut down. The Public Works Department was requested to have the island taken for a site for a lighthouse under the provisions of the Public Works Act, and this was done; but owing to no sum having been placed on the estimates for the light, except for the purchase of the land, no further steps have been taken in connection with the erection of this most important light. The Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania having agreed with the Government of New Zealand to contribute towards the cost of the erection and maintenance of a light on the Snares, such cost being divided amongst the contributing colonies on a basis of population, arrangements were made that the "Hinemoa" should visit these islands in January last, with delegates from the contributing colonies, for the purpose of selecting the site for the lighthouse. The delegates in their report, a copy of which is appended hereto, recommended a site on the main island. Subsequently a party of surveyors were despatched to the island, and a survey was made of a road or tram-line.

Harbours.—The main beacons at Kaipara Heads, owing to the Tory Shoal having extended, have had to be shifted. The new position for the beacons is not altogether satisfactory, as only one is against the sky-line. However, that was the best position that could be found. Smaller beacons were also erected to indicate when the course should be changed after crossing the bar. Somewhat extensive repairs were carried out to the dwellings at the pilot-station (including the Custom-house), the roofs being covered with galvanised iron, &c. At Mauakau a still further extension of the beacon tram-