

At Westport, plans are in hand for the construction of the workshops, and an Assistant Engineer has been appointed to carry out preliminary investigation work in connection with the main improvement scheme at that port.

The Chief Surveyor of Ships and his Assistant represented New Zealand at the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea held in London during the middle of the year. This was a most important Convention, having a distinct bearing on the safety of our seafaring men. A feature of the Convention was the adoption by the meeting of a recommendation that all foreign-going cargo ships of 500 tons and upwards be inspected and certificated annually for life-saving equipment. It is interesting to note that New Zealand ships, both home-trade and foreign-going, have been subject to this requirement for many years.

Interesting and progressive legislation was enacted during the year providing for the appointment of worker representatives on Harbour Boards, in line with the representatives of shipping interests, who have been so appointed by their respective interests for many years. The practical knowledge of these new members should be of distinct advantage to the various Harbour Boards. Worker representation on the administrative side is not new to the Marine Department, as for the last twenty years men with waterside experience have been appointed in the Department to positions as Cargo Gear Inspectors, the responsibilities of which have been carried out with credit and distinction by all concerned.

It is pleasing to report substantial progress by way of the fitting of navigational aids on our vessels, such as direction-finders, wireless telephones, and radar. Most of the larger vessels on our coast are now equipped with direction-finders or wireless telephones—or both in some cases. The masters of vessels have gratuitously carried out tests with their instruments. This data has been of considerable advantage to the Department. This is a splendid response by shipping interests in the provision of additional safety devices on our vessels.

The scientific staff attached to the Fisheries Branch have carried out research during the year into the pollution of harbours and rivers by industrial and other wastes. The research so far is in the embryonic stage, but sufficient data has been established to warrant serious consideration being given to this question, if posterity is to derive the benefit of our administration rather than the disadvantages which continued pollution would store up for it.

ADMIRALTY CHARTS

The Department acts as agent for the sale of Admiralty charts and publications, and maintains a stock at Head Office and at the principal Mercantile Marine offices in the Dominion. The stock includes all charts of the Dominion and many other parts of the world to which ships trading to or visiting the Dominion may be diverted.

A very useful service—that of advising masters of vessels regarding the folios of charts required for a particular voyage—has been made use of most frequently and more particularly by masters of tankers voyaging to Balikpapan and the Shatt Al Arab ports. The correction of charts necessitated by the establishment of additional navigational aids, the clearing of minefields, and the discovery of rocks, shoals, &c., still continues, and no less than 12,000 hand corrections were made during the year to our saleable stock.

NEW CHARTS

During the year several new additions of overseas charts were issued and one New Zealand No. 1970, Auckland Harbour. To this chart the plan of Calliope Dock was extended, general amendments in vicinity of commercial harbour, and Devonport Naval Base, and new compass roses.