

COAL-SHIPPING PORTS.

Westport.

The Port of Westport, from which is shipped the product of the Buller Coalfield, has made extraordinary progress in its development since operations were commenced in 1884.

The following table shows the official daily record of the depth of water on the bar for the years 1900–7, inclusive:—

Depths on the		Number of Days during Year							
Bar.		1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.
14 ft. to 16 ft.	...	...	...	15	...	...	...	...	...
16 ft. to 18 ft.	...	4	30	37	17	...	...	3	...
18 ft. to 20 ft.	...	20	62	94	87	44	14	60	29
20 ft. to 22 ft.	...	131	174	143	135	48	142	175	150
22 ft. to 24 ft.	...	159	82	70	109	161	169	119	149
24 ft. to 26 ft.	...	51	17	5	17	100	40	8	35
26 ft. to 28 ft.	...	...	...	1	...	13	...	...	2

It will be seen that the return for the past year shows a considerable improvement on previous soundings by a greater conformity in depth, and the harbour has never before been in such a satisfactory condition, mainly due to the raising and extension of the eastern breakwater and the efficient dredging operations, as proved by the almost entire absence of freshets or runs in the river during the year.

Within the harbour the average depth in the fairway was 24 ft., as against 22 ft. 1 in. during 1906.

The enormous increase in the shipments of coal may be judged from the fact that whereas during 1885 the total shipments were 78,094 tons, the shipments for 1907 amounted to 645,148 tons, and it may reasonably be anticipated that with the advent of new collieries and the increased output of those at present in operation, this annual increase in the shipments of coal from this harbour will be maintained.

The revenue of the Harbour Board, which in 1885 amounted to £8,107 13s. 11d., has gradually increased year by year, until in 1907 it amounted to £80,927 12s.

During the year 1,153 steamers and 17 sailing-vessels, aggregating in tonnage 599,872, worked Westport.

The construction of a floating or loading basin, estimated to cost £100,000 or more, is now being carried out, and this will, when completed, enable vessels of 600 ft. in length, and drawing 24 ft. of water, to be dealt with.

Greymouth.

The Port of Greymouth, from which is shipped the product of the Grey Coalfield, together with a considerable quantity of timber and other merchandise, has been navigable for 323 days during the year, and the average depth of water on the bar at high water is officially recorded at 22 ft., whilst the average depth in the river under similar conditions was 20 ft.

The number and tonnage of vessels entering the port was—743 steamers, of 334,613 tons register; 38 sailing-vessels, of 8,428 tons register: total, 343,041 tons register.

The shipments of coal amounted to 340,047 tons, in addition to which 44,194,888 superficial feet of timber and about 10,000 tons of other merchandise were exported.

The berthage accommodation available amounts to 2,770 ft., but this is being further increased by the construction of a tidal dock in the Kororo Lagoon, which, when completed, will give additional berthage of 2,000 ft., which will no doubt require further extension in the near future.

With the development of new collieries in the Paparoa and Point Elizabeth districts, the Coal Creek Railway extension, and the near completion of the Blackball and Midland Railways, the increasing importance of Greymouth as a shipping port is assured.

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