

of an aggregate tonnage of 640 tons, were licensed during the year. These ranged from open rowing-boats to steamers of 60 tons. About 30 per cent. of the vessels are fitted with oil-engines. There has been a scarcity of flounders in Bluff Harbour, and trevalli have not been so plentiful of late.

There are freezing-works at Port Pegasus, Stewart Island, out of which place three oil-engine boats are fishing, principally in the vicinity of the Traps, where good blue-cod and groper are caught. The average monthly catch is about 150 cases of cod, each case containing 65 lb., and about 100 groper. The cod are frozen and shipped to Sydney monthly, and there is a good market for the groper in Christchurch.

The Half-moon Bay and Horse-shoe Bay fishermen have to go further out than formerly, as blue-cod are not nearly so plentiful in the vicinity of the bays as in former years.

During the year very little fishing has been done round the West Coast Sounds. A freezing plant which was erected in Northport some years ago has been closed down for some time, but was reopened recently.

*Portobello Marine Fish Hatchery.*—A report received from the honorary secretary to the Hatchery Board is appended. There is no doubt that good work has been done at the station, and the Department would be justified in asking Parliament to vote the necessary funds to enable experiments to be made in bringing from the United Kingdom such food-fishes as it may be found desirable to introduce.

*Seals.*—The close season for seals has been extended until the 30th June, 1909. For some time past the Department has had reason to believe that seals were being illegally taken at the Cascades, on the west coast of the South Island, but until recently sufficient evidence could not be obtained to justify prosecution. Recently the police obtained evidence that Mr. Ritchie had killed a seal there, and proceedings were taken against him, which resulted in his being fined £5 and costs.

*Salmon.*—A vote was taken last session for the introduction of Atlantic salmon, and the Fisheries Department of Canada was asked to supply 500,000 ova, but that Department stated that it would be unable to supply more than 100,000. However, in anticipation of heavy loss owing to the ova being scarcely eyed when they were packed, 150,000 were sent. Mr. C. L. Ayson, Manager of the Salmon Station at Hakataramea, was sent to Canada to bring them to New Zealand, and, owing to the care exercised by him, the loss on the journey only amounted to about 10,000. A report on this shipment of ova by Mr. L. F. Ayson, Chief Inspector of Fisheries is appended.

In order to insure the success of the attempt to establish this fish in the Dominion, considerable quantities of ova should be imported every year for a few years.

It was decided last year to take ova from the quinnat salmon which were running up the Hakataramea River to spawn, but owing to the Manager of the Salmon Station being detained at the Exhibition at Christchurch, the best part of the run was over before he commenced to take the fish. However, during May and June he succeeded in collecting about 30,000 ova, from which about 25,000 fry were obtained. Of these, about 17,000 were liberated in the Hakataramea River, and there are 8,000 fine healthy yearlings in the ponds. The fish are now running up the river, and ova are being collected.

A report by the Chief Inspector as to the fish running up the rivers is appended.

During the year the following fish have been liberated from the ponds at Hakataramea—viz., 11 five-year-old Atlantic salmon, 103 four-year, 173 three-year, 18,937 two-year, and 166,851 one-year-old quinnat salmon. At the end of March there were in the ponds 30 five-year-old Atlantic salmon, 43 four-year, 148 three-year, 786 two-year, and 15,866 one-year-old quinnat salmon.

There have been a few prosecutions for illegally taking oysters and for fishing in unlicensed fishing-boats.

Mr. R. J. Downing, of the Upper Hutt, and several members of the Police Force in various parts of the Dominion have been appointed Inspectors of Fisheries.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Marine, Wellington.

GEORGE ALLPORT, Secretary.

The PRINCIPAL EXAMINER OF MASTERS AND MATES to the SECRETARY, Marine Department.

Office of the Principal Examiner of Masters and Mates,

Customhouse, Wellington, 4th May, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to submit my annual report on the examination of masters and mates in New Zealand.

The work, as usual, has been carried out by the Examiners at the four principal ports in a satisfactory manner.

The number of candidates for foreign-going and home-trade certificates has very steadily increased during the last couple of years. This has been especially marked with respect to Auckland, where during the last year the number of candidates for examination slightly exceeded that of all the other three principal ports put together. The total increase in the number of examinations held during the last year for foreign-going and home-trade examinations is 15 per cent., but the number of successful passes has increased by nearly 30 per cent. Captain Atwood was appointed Assistant-Examiner in Auckland in March, 1907, but owing to the increase in the number of examinations in Auckland, and the increased amount of work in the office of the Superintendent of Mercantile Marine in connection with the survey of ships, it was found to be absolutely necessary