

A return showing the harbour-works approved by the Governor in Council and the licences issued for the occupation of foreshore as sites for wharves and other works is appended.

Fisheries.—During last season the Department picked and sold 7,934 sacks of rock-oysters. They were obtained from the beds in the Hauraki Gulf, on Great Barrier Island, and in the Bay of Islands. The proceeds of the sale amounted to £4,775 17s. 6d., and the cost of picking and selling to £4,205 9s. 9d., giving a profit of £570 7s. 11d. The expenditure includes £160 for Inspectors' salaries, £71 10s. for interest on cost of and depreciation in value of two oil-launches, and £132 16s. 2d. for cost of erecting an oyster depot at Auckland. The profit made on the sale enables the Department to plant oysters on parts of the foreshore where the beds were ruined by pickers before the Department undertook the picking.

A careful examination of the beds in the Hauraki Gulf, Bay of Islands, Whangarei Harbour, and Kaipara Harbour, which has been made by Mr. Ayson, Chief Inspector of Fisheries, and the local Inspectors, shows that it is necessary that they should have a rest this year. Most of them have not properly recovered from the depletion which took place under the old system of picking. There are, however, very large numbers of oysters three years old and under, and it is considered that after this year there will be sufficient to enable them to be picked and sold every season.

The supply of fish in many parts of the Dominion, especially in Hawke's Bay, has been poor for some time past. The Wellington Harbour Ferries (Limited) fitted the s.s. "Duco" up as a trawler, and she made a trip to the Chatham Islands, where a fair quantity of fish was obtained. She was, however, unfortunately lost with all hands when making a second trip, and no other trawler has been there since.

A return showing the number of fishing-boats registered and licensed in the Dominion on the 31st December last is appended. This shows that the number registered was 1,347 and licensed 1,216. In the previous year the number registered was 1,299 and licensed 1,246.

Nothing has yet been done to make it compulsory on owners of boats and fish-curers to furnish returns of fish caught and cured. I would again recommend that the necessary regulations be made, so as to enable the Department to obtain reliable statistics.

Trawling has been prohibited in a part of Hawke's Bay, the area within which trawling in the Wellington Harbour is not allowed has been enlarged, the area within which netting is prohibited in the upper part of Otago Harbour has been reduced, and the regulations have been amended to allow netting for indigenous fish at the mouth or entrance of the Taieri River. Regulations have also been made permitting netting for trout in the New River estuary, below a right line drawn from Owi Point to the northern-eastern boundary of Stanley Township, except within a radius of half a mile from the mouths of rivers and streams flowing into the estuary; and also permitting netting for indigenous fish in any part of the estuary except within a radius of half a mile from the mouth of any river or stream. Fishermen and others asked that netting for indigenous fish should be allowed in the Aparima estuary as far as the Narrows and Yellow Bluff. The request was strongly opposed by the Southland Acclimatisation Society and the anglers, and after full consideration it was decided that the request could not be acceded to at present. It may be remarked that when netting in the estuary was prohibited in 1889 for the purpose of protecting trout the Department compensated the fishermen to the extent of £150.

Regulations have been made providing that set nets having an opening of not more than 9 ft. by 1 ft. may be used for taking whitebait in the Manawatu River and its tributaries, and prescribing rules to govern the use of these nets.

Sergeant Baskiville, of Devonport; Constables A. Skinner, of Tauranga; F. M. Cullen, W. J. Connor, and L. Spelman, of Wanganui; and W. Cooper, of Napier; and Mr. H. S. Rose, of Lower Hutt, have been appointed Inspectors of Fisheries.

Seals: Tenders were invited for the right to take seals on the Snares, Auckland, Campbell, Antipodes, and Bounty Islands, but only one tender was received, and that was only for the right in respect of Antipodes and Bounty Islands. After consideration, it was decided not to accept it, and the close season has been extended until the 30th June, 1911.

The following is the purport of the reports received from the local Inspectors:—

At Auckland the supply of schnapper during the year has more than met the demand. During the summer months the boats were limited by the dealers to less than half-time. Flounders have been plentiful. Mullet appear to be increasing since the close season was made three years ago, but most of them are small. Rock-cod, kahawai, trevalli, and garfish have been plentiful. There are 187 boats, employing 325 men, engaged in fishing at Auckland and Manukau. There are smoke-houses and fish-curing establishments in the district, employing about thirty men.

The principal kinds of fish taken in Manukau Harbour during the year were schnapper, flounders, and mullet, which were very plentiful, so much so that the dealers in Auckland, who take most of the fish, restricted the fishermen to a limited number per week. There are only three leased oyster-beds in the harbour, and very few oysters were taken from them last season, as there was a poor demand for Manukau oysters.

Bay of Islands and Outlying Districts: The principal fish caught at the Bay of Islands, Whangaroa, Mangonui, Hohoura, and Awanui were schnapper, flounder, parori, hapuka, kahawai, rock-cod, maumau, mullet, and crayfish. There were 2,004 cases of mullet canned at Purerua and Awanui. There are three canneries, one being at Purerua and two at Awanui, and there are 11 smoke-houses in the district, at which mullet, schnapper, and parori are smoked. The number of fishing-boats registered during the year was 48, ranging from $\frac{31}{100}$ to $4\frac{40}{100}$ tons, manned by 152 men, of which 86 were Europeans and 66 Maoris. This is an increase of 3 boats and 31 men as compared with the previous year.

Hawke's Bay: There has been a falling-off in the industry, especially during the last three months, but the owners of the trawlers expect an improvement in about a month's time, when it is anticipated the fish will be more plentiful. The principal kinds of fish taken have been flat