

reclamation which was made by the Kauri Timber Company by the deposit of sawdust and slabs has been put in hand by this Department, to which the land belongs. When the work is completed it is intended to cut the land up into suitable sections, road it, and then lease it. The breastwork which the Department constructed on the up-river side of the Kohukohu wharf requires to be extended a little further up, and I recommend that provision to enable this to be done be made in this year's estimates.

Application having been made by several persons for licenses to occupy sites for buildings on the foreshore at Rawene, it has been decided to cut the available foreshore up into sections and lease them.

A light is required on a dangerous rock in the Narrows, and a landing-stage is needed at the Rawene wharf. It is proposed to make provision for these in the current year's estimates.

A sum of £124 18s. 6d. has been expended in improving the channel at Waitapu.

In consequence of the small shipping trade to Okarito the services of the Harbourmaster as a permanent officer have been discontinued, and an arrangement has been made with him to guide vessels in and out of the river at £5 a trip. If a vessel calls off the bar but does not enter he is to receive half the above amount. He is also allowed to reside in the Department's house on condition that he executes any necessary repairs.

The Whangape Timber Company has been prosecuted for depositing sawmill refuse in Herekino Harbour. A fine of £2 and costs was imposed.

The sum of £1,440 13s. 4d. was collected for pilotage and port charges in respect of harbours under the control of the Department, as compared with £1,786 17s. during the previous year. A return of the amounts collected at the various ports, and also the amounts collected at ports under the control of Harbour Boards, is appended.

A return of the harbour-works approved by the Governor in Council and of licenses to occupy foreshores is also appended.

Mr. G. T. Shoebridge has been appointed Harbourmaster at Ngunguru, and Mr. J. Harrison has been appointed to look after the light at the entrance to Whangaparapara Harbour, in place of Mr. G. Cunis, resigned.

The Department has continued to issue licenses to persons to take shingle and sand from various beaches in the Hauraki Gulf and other places. There is a large demand in Auckland for the material for building purposes, and the Inspector of Beaches has to be very vigilant to prevent its being illegally taken.

A contract has been let for the survey of a reserve 29½ miles round the Coromandel and Thames foreshores. It is considered that it would be advisable to make such a reserve to prevent any damage being done to private land by licensed persons taking shingle and sand from the beaches.

The following proceedings have been taken by the Department against persons for illegally taking shingle, &c., viz.: S. Clare, master of the cutter "Kiwi"—fined £5 and costs; W. Carlsen, master of cutter "Nellie Mason"—fined £10 and costs.

Fisheries.

The question as to the conservation and improvement of the New Zealand fisheries is one of very great importance to the Dominion, and in order that the best advice might be obtained arrangements were made with the Government of Canada to allow Professor Prince, the Canadian Commissioner of Fisheries, who has a world-wide reputation in connection with fish and fisheries, to visit New Zealand for the purpose of examining and reporting on our fisheries. He arrived in Auckland on the 7th ultimo, and is now examining the fishing-grounds.

The rock-oyster beds in the Hauraki Gulf and the Bay of Islands were picked by the Department last season, and they yielded sufficient oysters to meet all demands—in fact, more could have been picked had they been wanted. Considering the bad state most of the beds were in when the Department took over the picking in 1908, it shows what proper conservation and proper picking can do. Departmental control and picking have wonderfully improved the beds, and enabled the public to obtain oysters at a reasonable price, whereas for some time before the Department took over the working of the beds oysters were dear, and the beds were becoming so rapidly depleted that it would not have been long before they were worked out.

In past seasons the smallest quantity of oysters sold by the Department in one lot has been one sack, which has compelled a person who wanted a smaller quantity to either combine with others to purchase and divide a sack, or else to buy from dealers at, in many cases, a considerably increased price. So as to extend the privilege of buying at a reasonable price to persons who require only small quantities, it has been decided to sell them at the depot at Auckland this season in quantities of not less than five dozen at 1s. for that quantity, or 3s. for a kerosene-tin full, a tin containing about eighteen dozen.

During last year's open season—that is, from the 1st May to the 31st October—9,069 sacks of oysters were taken, and sold for £6,167 14s.

The cost of picking and selling, including interest and depreciation on the cost of the oil-launches used by the Inspectors, was £4,797 14s. 8d., giving a net profit of £1,359 19s. 4d. Part of this profit was used in replanting depleted areas at Rabbit and Long Islands and the coast between Kikowhakariri Bay and Coromandel Harbour; also at Port Fitzroy, Great Barrier, and in continuation of the practice of replanting depleted areas in the Hauraki Gulf, planting has this season been done on the foreshore between Kirita Bay and Tapu, and at Manaia and Te Kuma Bays and adjacent islands. The oysters on the areas replanted in previous years are looking well. Of the oysters picked, 335 sacks were sold at Russell, 7,962 at Auckland, 277 at New Plymouth, 217 at Gisborne, 96 at Napier, 64 at Wellington, 18 at Hokitika, 33 at Greymouth, 19 at Nelson, 19 at Westport, 12 at Patea, 4 at Wanganui, 4 at Waitara, and 9 at Christchurch.