

of several new fishing-grounds for other fish nearer to the city which have been frequented by the fishermen. Hake have been caught in increasing quantities. The principal fish caught have been cod, hapuku, butterfish, and hake.

Municipal Fish-market.—There has been a good increase in the patronage by the public of the local fish-market, and good supplies have come to hand, the market having received better support from the small fishermen. Good prices have been obtained for the supplies, while the public has been able to obtain the fish at reasonable figures.

Foxton.—The fishing industry during the year has been in a very satisfactory condition. Whitebait were plentiful during the season, and some good catches were made. Flounders and schnapper have also been plentiful, but the fishermen's boats are not suitable for going over the bar, where the schnapper-grounds are, in bad weather. Kahawai have not been so plentiful as last season, but occasionally some large catches were made.

Manukau.—There has been considerable improvement in the fishing industry, and there are forty-one licensed boats engaged in fishing in the harbour. Schnapper, mullet, and flounders have been fairly plentiful.

New Brighton.—With the exception of whitebait, fish have not been so plentiful as in previous years. Flounders, soles, herrings, and red cod have been very scarce. The prohibition of the use of hurdles has enabled every one to get a fair share of whitebait, and there have been very few complaints from regular fishermen.

Rangiora.—Whitebait-fishing has been fairly good. Besides whitebait the principal fish caught were flounders, soles, moki, kahawai, and herrings, but the catches have not been very good.

Lyttelton.—The supply of fish has been fairly plentiful. The greater part of the supply consists of hapuku, schnapper, and trumpeter, which come from Kaikoura, very few of these fish being caught near Lyttelton. Flounders, soles, red cod, butterfish, herring, and garfish have been fairly plentiful in and near Lyttelton Harbour, and the catches have been good. Crayfish were plentiful during the season. Blue cod, gurnet, mullet, and trevalli have been scarce.

Timaru.—The fishing during the past year has been fairly good, and the local market has been well supplied. During the greater part of the year the principal fish taken were groper, flounders, soles, brill, and barracouta. A good deal of the fish is sent to Christchurch and to the inland towns. The fishermen have made a request to the Harbour Board to build a market for the fishing-boat wharf in order that they may be able to retail their fish direct to the public.

Moeraki.—Fair catches of groper, blue cod, and red cod were made in the early part of the season, but later on all fish became scarce, and many of the fishermen had to lay their boats up.

Oamaru.—The principal fish taken were groper, blue cod, and ling, but the catches have been poor, mainly on account of the unfavourable weather.

Dunedin.—The market has been fairly well supplied, and the catches have been as good as those made in the previous year. Three steam trawlers have been in use during the year, and they and several of the fishing-boats which were fitted with trawling-gear during the winter months obtained good catches of flounders and soles. Groper were plentiful up to the end of February, but have since been getting scarce. Kingfish were taken in fairly large quantities during the summer months, and good hauls of barracouta were made within a few miles of Otago Heads. Ling have not been so plentiful as during previous seasons. Good hauls of red cod have been made by the trawlers, but very few have been taken by the line fishermen. The supply of terakili and moki has met the demand, and some good catches of trumpeter have been made, but the supply has been intermittent. Inside the harbour flounders and trevalli have been caught in fairly large numbers by the seine fishermen.

Nuggets.—The season has been a poor one, and the boats have had to go farther away. Groper, ling, and barracouta have been the principal fish taken. Fair catches of blue cod were made early in the season, but this fish is now very scarce.

Pounawea.—The seine fishermen report a fairly good year. The flounder, which is the principal fish taken, has been plentiful. Most of the fish are sold locally.

There are 121 fishing-boats registered in the Otago District.

Bluff.—Good catches of fish have been made during the year. The principal fish taken were blue cod, groper, moki, and trumpeter, which have been plentiful. 6,986 cwt. of fish, valued at £9,050, were exported from the Dominion.

Seals.

A close season for seals existed in New Zealand from the end of August, 1894, until the 1st July last, but owing to poaching, which it was found impossible to stop, the seals did not increase to anything like the extent they would have done had they been left alone. It was proposed a few years ago to grant licenses for the right to take seals, one of the conditions of which was that a royalty should be paid on each skin. Tenders were invited for the licenses, but none were received. The Department has not been able to ascertain the number of skins taken during the season, but 490, valued at £529, were exported from the Dominion. It is proposed that there shall be an open season this year.

Portobello Marine Fish-hatchery.

I attach reports from Mr. G. M. Thomson, Chairman of the Portobello Marine Fish-hatchery Board, and Mr. T. Anderton, Curator of the Hatchery, which give full information as to the work that is being carried out.