

During the year I have inspected the lighthouses at Castle Point, Portland Island, East Cape, Cuvier Island, Ponui Passage, Tiritiri, Mokohinou, Chicken's Island, Cape Brett, Cape Maria van Diemen, Kaipara, Manukau, and Cape Egmont; but pressure of departmental work has prevented me visiting those in Cook Strait and the South.

A rearrangement has been made in the night watches at lighthouses where there are two keepers, which allows two watches to be kept from the 1st November to the end of February, the first watch being from sunset to midnight and the second from midnight to sunrise. At three-men stations the watches remain as hitherto—namely, first watch from sunset to 8 p.m., second from 8 p.m. until midnight, third from midnight to 4 a.m., and fourth from 4 a.m. until sunrise.

Three keepers have died, two have resigned, two have been transferred to other Departments, and one has been dismissed from the service for going to sleep on watch, when the light, which is a revolving one, became stationary. Eight new keepers have been appointed to fill the vacancies.

The following additions and repairs have been made to lighthouses:—Cape Maria van Diemen: Winches repaired; second assistant keeper's house enlarged. Mokohinou: Landing-place improved and new crane erected. East Cape: Boat-shed finished and new telegraph-cable laid. Manukau Head: Fence erected. Kaipara: Washhouse erected. Pencarrow: Fence erected. French Pass: Flagstaff erected. Stephen Island: Underground water-tanks repaired. Cape Campbell: Rabbit-proof fence erected. Akaroa Head: Incandescent light installed. Taiaroa Head: Telephones and washtubs put in. Cape Saunders: Winch repaired. Nugget Point: Fowlhouses, cow-shed, and stables erected. Dog Island: Roofs repaired, porches built, drains laid, and new lightning-conductor fitted. Centre Island: New boat supplied.

Marine Store.

The new store for the Department on the reclaimed land at Wellington has been completed, and the two old stores which were at Pipitea Point have been moved to the new site. The new store has been fitted with a travelling crane which enables the work of taking in and putting out goods to be carried out more expeditiously.

Fog-signals.

The explosive fog-signals at Cuvier Island, Pencarrow Head, Godley Head, and Taiaroa Head have been maintained in good working-order. Repairs have been made to those at Godley Head and Taiaroa Head.

The light dues collected during the year amounted to £39,216 10s. 4d., as compared with £41,745 12s. 4d. during the previous year.

Harbours.

The s.s. "Hinemoa" has carried out the work of cleaning and painting the buoys in the harbours under the control of the Department. Arrangements have been made for the erection of a beacon to carry a light in the Narrows, Hokianga Harbour, between Rawene and Kohukohu, and a light has been ordered. A new retaining-wall is being built round the area at Kohukohu, which was reclaimed by the deposit of sawdust when a sawmill was working there. The Department's intention when it started this wall was to road the land, cut it up, and lease the sections, but since the work was commenced the Railway Department has asked for the area for a site for a sawmill which it proposes to establish at Hokianga, and the question of whether the request will be acceded to is under consideration. A portion of the foreshore at Rawene has been surveyed and cut up into sections, which have been leased, and it is proposed to survey a further portion so that it may be cut up into sections for lease as demand for them arises.

As it has been found inconvenient for the Harbourmaster to be stationed at Hokianga Heads, it has been decided to move him and the boatman to Rawene, where he will be in a central position, and arrangements have been made to erect a new house for him there, and to move the boatman's house up from the Heads.

The contract which was let for making a buoy to carry the proposed light at Beacon Reach, Kaipara Harbour, has not yet been completed, owing to the delay in getting the necessary material from England which arose in consequence of the war; but as soon as the buoy is ready it will be placed in position, and the light will be placed on it.

In February last the automatic light at Shelly Beach in this harbour went out owing to the gas escaping from the cylinders. The light was relighted as soon as a fresh supply of gas was obtained, and there has been no difficulty with it since.

The work of repairing and extending the training-wall at Karamea is being carried out. Floods have necessitated extensive modifications and additions to the contracts. The repairs to the wharf have been completed, and it is proposed to repair the wharf-shed.

The Harbours Act, 1910, gives power to lease mud-flats on which there is not sufficient water at high water for navigation purposes, the leases not to exceed twenty-one years; and applications for leases in Kaipara Harbour have been received, the applicants desiring to reclaim the land by banking the tide out, and then to use the areas for fruitgrowing and gardening. Arrangements have been made with the Lands Department to inspect the flats, and report as to the areas in which they should be leased and as to the rents that should be charged.

The practice of licensing persons to take gravel and sand from the foreshores on payment of a royalty has been continued, most of the licenses being for the Hauraki Gulf. It is proposed to proclaim a strip of land round a portion of the gulf to be a reserve, so that the taking of the material from the foreshore may not cause injury to private land. The necessary survey has been made and the plans prepared.

A report by the Marine Engineer on the various works dealt with by him is appended.