

area to have control of a river from the source to its mouth. This matter, with particular reference to the Orari and Waihi Rivers, is at present engaging your attention.

General.—There has been no decrease during the year in the other functions of the Department under the various Acts affecting local government. The regulations under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1908, were revised and brought up to date. By-laws of thirteen local bodies were confirmed under the By-laws Act, 1910. Validations of irregular proceedings in matter of form have been as numerous as in former years, and there is an ever-increasing tendency for local bodies to seek the advice of the Department on various matters. The Department is always willing to advise where possible, but many of the requests have to be declined as involving the giving of legal opinions.

(2.) *Inland Fisheries.*

The Department has now had control of the Rotorua and Taupo fisheries for three years, and during the past twelve months the work begun in 1913 has been developed in conformity with the original object, the improvement of the fishing in the lakes.

Destruction of Ill-conditioned Fish.—Immediately on the close of the fishing season 1914–15 the work of thinning out ill-conditioned fish was again undertaken, and carried on from the 1st June to the 31st October. The total number taken and destroyed was—

	Number.	Tons	cwt.	qr.	lb.
Rotorua Lake	14,979	13	7	1	26
Taupo Lake	10,831	19	6	2	6
Total	25,810	32	14	0	4

During that period of the current fishing season falling between the 1st November and the 31st March ill-conditioned fish taken from the fish netted for market and destroyed numbered—

	Number.	Tons	cwt.	qr.	lb.
Rotorua Lake	10,264	9	3	1	4
Taupo Lake	4,843	8	12	3	24
Total	15,107	17	16	1	0

The figures for the three years are—

Rotorua Lake	58,455	62	10	3	17
Taupo Lake	31,283	68	1	1	10
Total	89,738	130	12	0	27

Marketing of Fresh and Smoked Fish.—The following statement shows the business of the 1915–16 season :—

	Number.	Tons	cwt.	qr.	lb.
Rotorua Lake	35,464	20	11	2	23
Taupo Lake	16,137	22	10	2	5
Total	51,601	43	2	1	0

The value of the marketable fish disposed of for each year since this Department took over the inland fisheries is as follows :—

	1915–16.	1914–15.	1913–14.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Rotorua Lake	963 18 7	655 12 5	706 3 2
Taupo Lake	901 19 2	857 10 8	510 19 8
Totals	£1,865 17 9	£1,513 3 1	£1,217 2 10

Following up the practice of the previous two years, netting operations were carried on during this period at such times and places as would not interfere with sportsmen, and the catches were limited to the number deemed desirable to be taken from the lakes for thinning-out purposes.

The Auckland City Council having established a fish-market under the powers conferred on it by the Auckland City Markets and Empowering Act, 1915, arrangements were entered into whereby a constant supply of fresh trout was made available for the public. Several private fish-merchants in Auckland also marketed the fish. Fish have at various times been sold to dealers in other towns in the Auckland Province, while of course both fresh and smoked have found a ready sale in Rotorua itself. The Railway Department has granted every facility for the carriage of the fish. I have to express appreciation of its co-operation.

In view of the large market proved to exist for fresh and smoked trout it is hoped that during next season it may be possible to start operations on Lakes Rotoiti, Tarawera, and the smaller lakes in addition to Rotorua. The fish in Rotorua are already showing a considerable improvement in quality as the result of the operations of the Department, and as time goes on it may become desirable to have occasional rests, in order to keep the stock of fish up to a high standard. The condition of the fish in Taupo already indicates the necessity of netting operations on a large scale, in order to maintain its established reputation as “the finest fishing-station in the world.”

On the establishment of the Convalescent Camp at Rotorua for invalided soldiers special regulations were made under the Fisheries Act, 1908, to enable free licenses to be issued to the soldiers in the camp. The Department’s launch is placed at their disposal on two days per week.