

Rangiora.—A good run of whitebait came up the Ashley last season. The value of the catch shows an increase on the two previous seasons. Fair catches of flounder and herring were made.

Kaipoi.—The past season has been the best for whitebait for some years, and some exceptionally good catches were made. Flounder have been plentiful, but rather small in size.

New Brighton.—The run of whitebait showed a decided improvement on the two preceding years.

Lyttelton.—The local Inspector reports that fish have been scarce on the local fishing-grounds, the quantity brought in being considerably less than during 1918. Unfavourable weather hindered fishing operations, and this no doubt helped to account for the reduced quantity brought in during the year.

Akaroa.—The quantity and value of fish marketed show a decrease on the returns for the preceding year. The local Inspector states that, on account of the want of suitable transport facilities by steamer and railway, fish frequently arrives at the Christchurch market in bad condition. With better arrangements for its transport there is no doubt but what a very much larger quantity could be forwarded.

Christchurch.—The fishing register shows that 135 boats were licensed in Christchurch district during the year. The following is a list of the number of boats and men employed: Lyttelton and Sumner, 41 boats, employing 63 men; Akaroa, 12 boats, employing 17 men; Kaikoura, 7 boats, employing 9 men; Southbridge, 11 boats, employing 18 men; Kaipoi and Styx, 44 boats, employing 45 men; Rangiora, 15 boats, employing 15 men; New Brighton, 5 boats, employing 5 men: total, 135 boats, employing 172 men.

Timaru.—During the past year fish have been scarcer and the cost to the consumer considerably higher than in previous years. Fishermen complain of what they consider excessively high railway freights on fish, also of the high rate of insurance charged on their boats. The wholesale value of fish brought in during the year is estimated at £8,000.

Oamaru.—The local Inspector says that compared with former years this year shows a noticeable decrease in practically all kinds of fish, this being partly due to unusually bad weather, but mainly to the absence of fish on the usual fishing-grounds. The fishermen state that this season is the worst on record. The industry is handicapped by the high cost of benzine and gear, together with the slow and costly transit to the chief market—Christchurch. The fishermen point out the necessity for a fish-chilling plant at Oamaru, as it is forty hours from the time when the fish is caught before it reaches the Christchurch market.

Moeraki.—The quantity and value of fish taken during the year were about the same as in 1918.

Otago District.—Rough weather prevailed for a great part of the year and interfered very much with fishing operations along the coast, and in consequence there was a serious shortage of fish for months at a time in the Dunedin market, and consequently the fish which came forward at such times brought exceptionally high prices at the wholesale market. With the exception of the last two months poor catches of flat fish were made by the trawlers on the usual grounds. On account of the scarcity of flat fish the steam trawlers worked off shore in about 20 fathoms, getting fair catches of tarakihi, moki, and other round fish. The seine-net fishermen working inside the harbour were not affected to any extent by the unsettled weather, and have had a prosperous year. All the outlying fishing-ports were visited by the Inspector during the year, and a scarcity of fish was reported all round.

Invercargill.—The principal fish taken are flounder, blue cod, red cod, groper, and, in the season, sea-run trout. The quantity and value of indigenous fish marketed was about the same as in 1918. The Inspector states that there has been a decline in the quantity and size of the sea-trout taken, and he recommends that on account of this steady decline over a number of years in the trout caught for market, and the scarcity of sea-run trout getting up the rivers, trout-netting in the estuary should be done away with.

Bluff.—The season generally has been a good one both for fish and oysters. The export trade has been somewhat hampered through the irregularity of the intercolonial service.

Stewart Island.—The catches of fish during the past season have been fairly good. Bad weather during part of the year hindered fishing operations to some extent, and accounts for the decline in the quantity of fish brought in in comparison with the previous year's catch.

Chatham Islands.—The fishing industry is holding its own, and the fishermen are satisfied with their lot as far as earnings are concerned. The local Inspector strongly urges the necessity for a fishermen's settlement on these islands, as it would be of great advantage to the industry. A great deal of time is lost by the fishermen on account of the frequent spells of bad weather and heavy seas, and at such times these men are thrown absolutely idle, whereas if each family had sufficient land to keep a cow or two and have a garden their living-conditions would be very much improved.

Rock-oyster Beds.

As stated in the Marine Department's report, the total quantity of oysters taken for market last season was 10,422 sacks. Of this quantity 4,774 sacks were picked from the Bay of Islands beds, 66 from the Mangonui beds, 5,065 from the beds in the Hauraki Gulf, and 517 from the Great Barrier beds.

For several seasons in succession there has been a poor fixing of oyster-spat on the principal beds both in the Hauraki Gulf and at the Bay of Islands, and on that account a large extent of the beds will have to be lightly picked this season, which will mean a reduction in the total quantity which can be taken for market. On a few of the beds in the Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Islands there was a fair fixing of spat last season, but, as already stated, the fixing on the principal beds has been poor for several seasons. The oyster-rock taken up from Bay of Islands to Whangaroa Harbour in 1918 has