

Oamaru.—The Collector in his report states that the local fisheries experienced an uneventful year, last winter showing extremely poor returns, which, however, improved with the advent of summer. As usual, groper proved the mainstay of the local fleet, but as this fish is only found in quantities about twenty miles off shore the fishermen require fine weather and a liberal expenditure on petrol to secure good catches.

Moeraki.—The conditions on the fishing-grounds here are similar to those off the coast of Oamaru. On the whole the fishermen have had a good season, although the catches through the winter months were rather poor, yet during the summer season both groper and blue cod were plentiful.

Otago District.—The Inspector states that throughout the year fair catches of the usual market fish were taken on the outside grounds by the hook-and-line men. Taking the year on the whole the supply of line fish has not exceeded the demand. On several occasions groper and kingfish brought high prices, kingfish selling as high as 5s. each, and groper bringing £2 per case of about seven or eight fish. Large quantities of red cod and barracouta frequented the Otago waters. On account of no demand very few of these fish were brought in.

The trawling fleet have made poor catches for practically the whole of the year. One of the largest of these fishing-vessels has been laid up, as the owner states that he has been losing money for a considerable time. The hauling seine-net and set-net fishermen have taken good hauls of flounder and trevally throughout the year, and have averaged good wages. The Puketeraki fishermen have experienced a good season with crayfish.

Invercargill.—The fishing-grounds have been well supplied, and good catches have been made by the fishermen. There was a good run of whitebait in all the estuaries, and larger quantities than usual were marketed.

Bluff.—The usual market fish were plentiful on the Foveaux Strait and coastal fishing-grounds, and when good weather prevailed good catches were made. The Inspector reports that oysters are plentiful and in good condition on the different beds in the strait. Altogether the fishermen and oyster-dredgers have made good wages throughout the year.

Stewart Island.—The Inspector states in his report that the fishing industry has been very good during the past year. Blue cod as usual is the principal fish sought after, and good catches have been made during the season for these fish. Trumpeter and groper are plentiful on all the grounds around Stewart Island, but there is very little demand for these fish, as the fish-dealers at Bluff will only take very small quantities.

Chatham Islands.—The year under review has been up to or rather better than the average so far as the industry is concerned, both as regards employment and the quantity of fish taken. Fish of excellent quality are abundant. In November the industry experienced a severe set-back on account of the wreck of the fish-carrying steamer "Rama," which struck a rock when leaving Kaingaroa Harbour, and had to be beached, and ultimately became a total wreck. It was several months before another vessel was put on to carry the fish to Wellington.

RETURNS.

The following returns are appended hereto:—

(1.) The various kinds of fish caught, and approximately the total quantities and value of fish landed at the different ports, for the year ended 31st March, 1925.

(2.) The total quantity of oysters taken from the different beds, the quantity disposed of in the Dominion, the quantity exported, and total value.

(3.) The total quantity and value of fish imported into and exported from New Zealand during the year ended 31st December, 1924.

(4.) The number of steam trawlers, oil-engine trawlers, and other vessels employed in net and line fishing, with the number of fishermen employed, and approximately the total number of persons engaged in the fishing industry at each port for the year ended 31st March, 1925.

(5.) The number and kinds of whales taken at each whaling-station, and the quantity and value of oil, bonedust, or fertilizer produced.

MARINE FISH-HATCHERY AND BIOLOGICAL STATION, PORTOBELLO.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 2nd June, 1925.

On behalf of the Board of the Portobello Marine Fish-hatchery and Biological Station, I beg to forward herewith the report of the work carried out during the year ended 31st March, 1925.

Turbot (*Rhombus maximus*).—The experiment started in 1913 for the introduction of this fine food fish has been temporarily ended as far as this station is concerned. At the date of our last annual report eleven fish were still kept in the tanks, although it was apparent that there was no hope of their spawning. It is quite evident that flat fish require a considerable pressure of water to enable them to discharge their ova. No direct experiments have been made to ascertain what depth and pressure of water is required, but during the spawning-time (July and August) of the native flat fishes (flounders, sole, and brill) these latter were seldom taken by the trawl in less than about 20 fathoms. Absolutely ripe fish brought into the hatchery-ponds immediately held up their ova, and apparently only parted with them with difficulty, and in several cases retained them in the body.