

The Napier Harbour Board Loan and Empowering Bill, which proposed to authorize the expenditure of a further £75,000 on reclamation works, was opposed by the Department on various grounds, and, as petitions had been presented praying for an investigation into the affairs of the Board, the Local Bills Committee recommended that the Bill be not allowed to proceed pending the report of the Commission. This Commission commenced its sittings on the 4th August, and is now preparing its report.

HARBOUR-WORKS.

Karamea Harbour.—During the previous period a substantial addition to the original wharf has been added to cope with the timber traffic, and to this has been added tram and road accommodation to give access to the timber-skidways. A new wharf shed is in process of erection. A tramway is being built from the limestone and granite deposits at the Oparara to the training-wall. This tramway has been put in to tap the stone deposits in the Oparara Gorge for the purpose of gradually replacing the existing wooden structure by a permanent stone wall.

Little Wanganui.—A new wharf has been erected here, and it is proposed to carry out further improvements by means of a groyne when the traffic warrants it.

Russell.—A new reinforced-concrete wharf has been erected by the Bay of Islands Harbour Board, assisted by a substantial subsidy from the Government.

Waikokopu Harbour.—A considerable amount of work has been carried out here. The s.s. "Talune," which was sunk on the seaward side of the wharf to act as a breakwater, has been very effective in improving the conditions at the wharf. Recent heavy weather has, however, damaged her somewhat considerably, and she will probably require strengthening with stonework at an early date. The existing goods-shed has been enlarged, and additional traffic facilities provided to deal with the business of the port, which has increased considerably during the past year.

Waikawa Harbour.—A small wharf has been erected here for the convenience of the fishermen.

Waikouaiti River Entrance.—A small training-wall has been built, and wind-breaks erected across the sandspit at the entrance of this harbour. The work has been partly financed by the Government and partly by the local residents.

Wharf and Shed, Hui House, Whangape.—This work has been completed and handed over to the trustees.

Havelock Wharf.—Fairly extensive repairs have been carried out to this wharf, the moneys being provided and the work carried out by the Department.

Paihia Wharf.—The construction of this wharf on a new site near the post-office was finished during the year.

Horeke Launch-landing.—This launch-landing was undertaken and carried out during the year.

Mangawai Wharf.—Alterations to this wharf, consisting of the dismantling of the old shed and the erection of a new shed, were completed during the year by the Otamatea County Council.

Gisborne.—Owing to representations made to you by the Board the Marine Engineer visited Gisborne, and, after having inspected the works in company with the Board's Engineer, conferred with the Board. The Board's request, it was found, was not for a comprehensive report, but for a reply to certain questions, to which answers were furnished as far as was practicable. The answering of a questionnaire prepared by a Harbour Board does not necessarily afford a Marine Engineer an opportunity of fully advising. The Board's position is unfortunate in that so much money has been expended in directions which would show full proportionate result only in a completed comprehensive scheme, and it has been particularly unfortunate in the quarrying operations which were to produce the stone for breakwater purposes. The scheme of works is one which can produce the full benefit only as a completed whole, and the Board's undertakings to the ratepayers apparently preclude their raising further moneys, at any rate until the position is better understood and the benefits of an overseas ship harbourage appreciated.

Napier.—Matters in Napier have been very unsettled, and as a result of petitions it was decided to set up a Royal Commission to go into the whole matter, and it is hoped that the findings of this Commission (which has a most comprehensive order of reference) will settle a number of matters which have been in doubt and the cause of dissension on the Board and in the district, and will bring about a better state of things.

LIGHTHOUSES.

Piako River Leading-lights.—The original oil-burning leading-lights have been replaced by a small automatic flashing acetylene burner mounted on a reinforced-concrete pile dolphin.

Kakurangi Point.—This light has now been converted from an oil-burning watched light to an automatic flashing light on the Dalen principle. The installation was completed during the year, but an additional burner is being provided and will be installed on arrival.

Dog Island.—The existing accommodation for the keepers, which dates back to 1868, has become somewhat out of date and weather-worn. A contract has been let for the erection of two new and up-to-date dwellings, and material is now being landed on the island for that purpose.

French Pass Beacon.—This beacon, which was originally an oil-burner, has been converted to automatic operation. Previously it had to be attended to daily from the mainland, and was a source of considerable inconvenience. The new installation is a decided improvement.

Pencarrow Lighthouse.—The fog-signal at this lighthouse, which was of the old explosive type, has been dismantled, and a compressed-air diaphone signal has been erected in a suitable building and is now in operation. This signal, which gives a distinctive blast of three seconds every minute, is one of the latest developments in this branch of engineering.

North Cape Light.—It is now proposed to erect a light on this point, and an order has been placed for an automatic flashing light with a range of approximately fifteen miles. The apparatus is expected to arrive shortly, when the work of erection will be put in hand.