

(4B) *Hemp.*

No evidence was tendered in regard to hemp-production in Hawke's Bay, but the Harbour Board returns show that the undernoted tonnage was transhipped at Napier from coastal boats to overseas vessels. This hemp is produced at mills situated at or near Wairoa and Waikokopu, and when sold to London is sent down the coast and transhipped at Napier. When, however, shipment is made to Australia, the hemp is sent coastwise to Wellington, and transhipped thence to one of the intercolonial steamers. The latter course was adopted in 1925-26, and this is the reason why no hemp was handled at Napier last year: 1922-23, 1,316 tons; 1923-24, 1,682 tons; 1924-25, 766 tons; 1925-26, Nil.

Apart from the question of Wairoa and Waikokopu hemp, however, we are informed by the Chief Hemp Grader that a scheme for utilizing the swamp lands at Lake Pokawa or Tehauke for flax-production is now in operation, and, as the country is well adapted for flax-growing, a considerable output may be expected. Further information given by hemp-exporters is to the effect that it is safe to say that in six years' time an output of from 1,000 to 2,000 tons per annum may be expected from Tehauke mills, while it is anticipated that if the results from the present areas are satisfactory other swamp lands will be brought into production in the same way. Hemp may therefore be looked upon as a potential export from Napier in the future; but it must always be remembered that so long as the present shipping-expenses at Napier, including lighterage, are on so high a scale the tendency will be for the hemp to be railed to Wellington in the same way as the bulk of the dairy produce.

(5) IMPORTS.

Napier is an active distributing centre, operating both by land and coastal routes. The area of consumption covered is practically the same as the area of production, except that certain outlying portions come within the competitive influence of the distributing trade from Gisborne, Auckland, and Wellington. These debatable areas are excluded from the whole area by a blue line, and within the restricted area thus delineated the population is estimated at 54,400 persons. (See Map I, Commission's Exhibit No. 3.) The purchasing-power, however, is high, as might be expected from the volume of exports, and the average tonnage of imports—viz., 134,330 tons for the four years 1922-26—is sufficient evidence of this. The following table shows a comparison of the volume of imports over a period of four years with those of other main ports, including both inwards cargo and transhipments:—

	Napier.	Dunedin.	Lyttelton.	Wellington.	Auckland.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
1922-23	114,429	157,221	269,950	1,039,639	1,205,972
1923-24	140,009	311,994	459,860	1,166,630	1,417,637
1924-25	133,504	349,331	511,403	1,366,573	1,572,627
1925-26	149,380	333,088	484,959	1,364,465	1,492,398
Totals	537,322	1,151,634	1,726,172	4,937,307	5,688,634
Average volume per annum	134,330	287,908	431,543	1,234,327	1,422,158

(6) INDUSTRIAL.

In common with other centres in the Dominion, Napier looks forward hopefully to the time when manufactures and industries can become sufficiently established to provide employment for a larger city population, which will in turn furnish a local market for a greater portion of the products of the soil. Unfortunately, these hopes can only be realized in the more distant future. Napier serves too small a population and is too near the large manufacturing centres of the Dominion to compete successfully at present in such industries as might have a chance of success. Furthermore, Hawke's Bay does not possess natural resources, such as mineral deposits, which lend themselves to successful industrial-establishment. For these reasons, therefore, it would be altogether too optimistic to take into account the growth of manufactures or industry as a practical factor in respect to harbour-development in the near future.

(7) PAST SHIPPING RECORDS.

An examination of the Harbour Board's records to ascertain the extent of shipping accommodated in the past, and the tendencies indicated by comparative figures, has also revealed useful information. It is noteworthy that there is no decided tendency for the number of vessels calling at the port to increase, although the tonnage accommodation has grown greater. Indeed, a remarkable fact is that in the matter of one class of vessel—viz., coastal and inter-colonial passenger steamers—there is a marked falling-off as compared with pre-war conditions; but this diminishing of trade is shown by other New Zealand ports, and is due to causes beyond the control of Hawke's Bay and its harbour officials and policy.

The following figures, taken from the Napier Harbour Board's Annual Report of 1926, illustrate the movements. We have extracted them from Exhibits No. 37, 38, 39, 62, and 63, to show the number of vessels, tonnage, and cargo landed or shipped at the Roadstead, Outer (Breakwater), and Inner Harbour.