

IX. R.F.A. "NUCULA."

44. R.F.A. "Nucula" was in commission from the 8th to the 10th May, 1935, for cleaning tanks before being taken in hand for necessary internal and external repairs prior to a voyage to San Francisco for a full cargo of oil, some of which was transferred to the ships of the New Zealand Division at Bora Bora and Suva.

X. NAVAL BASE.

45. The usual periodical dockings and refits of ships have been carried out during the year. It was anticipated that H.M.S. "Diomedé" would be taken in hand for biennial refit at the end of 1935, but her departure for special service has necessitated this refit being carried out in England.

46. Plans for the reconstruction of the Naval Base within a period of three years have been drawn up and approved. Work on the first year's programme commenced in September, 1935.

47. The actual construction of the buildings is behind schedule, but contracts have been let and are in course of fulfilment.

48. The lengthening of the "Calliope" Dock is proceeding, and plans have been drawn up for the extension and renewal of the existing wharves which are necessary for the maintenance of "Achilles" class cruisers.

49. Steps have been taken to enter into negotiations with the Auckland Harbour Board for a new agreement to meet the conditions of present-day and future requirements. Satisfactory progress has been made.

XI. NAVAL ARMAMENT DEPOT.

50. The overcrowding of explosives at Fort Takapuna has made a move to a larger magazine depot essential, and a start has been made to build a new magazine in an area capable of expansion. The building of this depot is designed upon the basis of a three-year programme, and good progress has been made in this the first year.

XII. VISITS OF FOREIGN WARSHIPS.

51. The Japanese Warships "Asama" and "Yakumo" visited Wellington from the 15th to 18th May, 1935, and Auckland from the 21st to 24th May, 1935.

52. The French sea-going sloop "Admiral Charner" visited Auckland from the 30th July to 5th August, 1935.

XIII. DRILLS, EXERCISES, AND TRAINING AFLOAT.

53. The normal programme of exercises and drills has been carried out, and details are given in previous sections.

54. A visit to Australia to carry out combined operations with the Royal Australian Navy was arranged for February and March, 1936, but had to be cancelled because of the international situation.

55. A combined mine-sweeping exercise by the two Imperial sloops was carried out at Akaroa in March for the benefit of Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve personnel.

XIV. POLICY: MATERIAL RESERVES.

56. As mentioned in my predecessors' report last year, the main policy is being directed towards the provision of adequate repair and other facilities required for the larger and more modern cruisers. This work is not as far advanced as in the proposed programme, and further delay may affect the refit of "Leander" class cruisers at the base.

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E. R. DRUMMOND,

Commodore Commanding New Zealand station.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (470 copies), £4 5s.

By Authority: G. H. LONEY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1936.

Price 3d.]