

The following table illustrates the high charges ruling at Napier in comparison with four other ports selected at random. Many ports charge no wharfage on fish being landed :—

Wharfage Rates.

	Fish.		Fuel Oil.		Coal.	
	Inwards.	Outwards.	Inwards.	Outwards	Inwards.	Outwards.
	Per Ton. s. d.	Per Ton. s. d.	Per Ton. s. d.	Per Ton. s. d.	Per Ton. s. d.	Per Ton. s. d.
Bluff	1 9 (frozen)	1 9 (frozen)	2 6	3 0	1 6	1 6
	4 0 (other)	4 0 (other)		(Bulk 1s.)		
Lyttelton ..	0 5	0 5	1 6	1 6	0 9	0 9
Nelson	4 6	3 6	4 6	3 6	1 10	1 10
	(general rate)	(general rate)	(general rate)	(general rate)		
Napier	6 0	4 9	6 0	4 9	3 6	2 0
	(general rate)	(general rate)	(general rate)	(general rate)		
Auckland ..	2 6	1 6	1 9	0 10	1 7	0 9
	(general rate)	(general rate)				

We would like to make it quite clear that this Committee is well aware of the magnitude of many of the problems which face the Napier Harbour Board, but our recommendations in so far as they affect this body are as reasonable as it is possible to make them. They are submitted after a careful weighing-up of the case presented by the fishermen. If the finances of the Board are in an unfortunate condition, some Government assistance may be warranted to carry out the improvements suggested.

Gisborne.

The facilities provided at this port are excellent. There is good berthage accommodation for the fleet, a slipway is available at very reasonable charges, and the Harbour Board allows the fishermen a good deal of latitude in regard to the landing and sale of their fish at the wharf. This Harbour Board charges *no* dues and *no* wharfage to the fishermen, and is to be congratulated on the assistance which it has rendered to the industry.

Whakatane.

No special facilities are provided at Whakatane, but as the fishermen are allowed to berth their vessels free of charge and no wharfage is charged they have no grounds for complaint.

Tauranga.

No complaints were received as to the facilities here, and they appear to be adequate. Two slipways are available at a reasonable charge, and the annual mooring fee of £1 10s. is also reasonable.

Auckland.

At Auckland, the most important fishing port in New Zealand, the facilities for the fishing-fleet leave much to be desired. No proper berthage is provided for the large fleet. The vessels in bad weather are piled up inside the Viaduct, where there is insufficient berthage, the boats having to lie abreast of each other, sometimes four deep. This leads to bumping, squeezing, and subsequent damage. It also causes great inconvenience to the men, in having to clamber over the boats to get themselves and their stores aboard their own vessels. There is also an insufficiency of ladders to enable the men to get from the boats to the wharf deck. The Harbour Board charges for these small boats—viz., £2 10s. per annum—are reasonable only if adequate berthage is provided. The wharfage of 1d. per 100 lb. basket of fish is considered reasonable. The steam-trawler berth is very exposed, and it was stated that the vessels are subject to heavy bumping at their berths. The effect of this might be overcome by the use of fender-piles.

North Auckland.

Whangarei.—The harbour facilities at Whangarei and Bay of Islands are very good and any charges made are reasonable. There is adequate provision for the mooring or berthing of boats, for slipways, and for repair facilities.

In the more northern harbours the boat-owners have quite reasonable facilities, considering their small numbers.

Helensville.

The fishermen at Helensville urged that the wharf used by the fishermen be put into order, it being at present in a dangerous condition. As the ownership of the wharf was in doubt, the matter was referred by the Committee to the Marine Department.

The Public Works Department, through its District Engineer, has now submitted an excellent plan for the rehabilitation of this wharf. The Department's view is that the wharf is in a very dangerous condition, and its Engineer recommends that the whole of the superstructure should be demolished, the piles drawn from the northern portion, a breastwork be constructed using the old piles and timber, and the southern portion of the wharf be reconstructed. This would give the fishermen adequate facilities for attending to their nets and berthage for their boats. The preliminary estimate was £600.