

*Mangonui Wharf.*—The contract for this reinforced-concrete structure was almost completed during the year, the principal unfinished item being the wharf shed. The wharf is L shaped, the approach being 100 ft. long and the wharf 45 ft. wide by 100 ft. long. The wharf shed is approximately 60 ft. by 30 ft., with cool-store 20 ft. by 10 ft. in one corner and a small office in the other corner.

*Whangaparapara Wharf.*—This wharf, consisting of a jetty 80 ft. long and a tee 15 ft. by 53 ft. with a shed 12 ft. by 18 ft., crane and landing-steps, has been completed. The depth of water at face of tee at low water is 8 ft.

*Waikopu Harbour.*—The operations at this harbour have been carried out by the Wairoa Harbour Board on behalf of this Department.

During the year 102 vessels worked the port and handled 5,376 tons of general cargo, 91,749 square feet of timber, 9,142 sleepers, and 124 hardwood poles. In addition, eleven overseas vessels worked the port and lifted 4,481 quarters of beef, 134,040 carcasses of mutton and lamb, 4,369 carcasses of pork, 6,972 packages of sundries, 886 bales of wool, 199 bags of hides, 20 casks pelts, 3,161 carcasses of boneless beef, and 187 tons of general cargo.

Ordinary maintenance has been carried out to wharf and buildings. An examination of the wharf-piles has been carried out, and several piles were found due for replacement. New piles are to be driven as soon as the necessary equipment is available.

*Waitaria Bay Wharf.*—General repairs were carried out to this wharf during the year.

*Portage Wharf.*—General repairs were carried out during the period.

*Hicks Bay.*—A report has been prepared on a proposal to extend this wharf.

*Little Wanganui Harbour.*—The decking of the wharf was entirely renewed and, in addition, some snagging was done on the river fairway. Plans have also been prepared for wharf-extension.

*Karamea Harbour.*—Renovations and repairs were carried out to the Harbourmaster's cottage. The river-control works are well in hand and are likely to ultimately reopen the harbour.

*Hokitika Harbour.*—A scheme was prepared after survey for renewal of portion of the south training-wall, using concrete blocks, but no work was carried out.

*Okarito Harbour.*—The lagoon-mouth has been diverted to the designed position south of the newly-constructed training-wall, but the channel has not been workable to the wharf owing to shoaling. Repairs have been carried out to the wharf, and skidways to hold 220,000 superficial feet of timber have been constructed.

*Jackson's Bay.*—During the year a survey and preparations for a wharf and access thereto were carried out.

*Bruce Bay Landing.*—The enlargement of the goods-shed at the Flower Pot Landing is in hand.

*Westport Harbour.*—Generally speaking, the working draught of vessels using the Port of Westport is governed by the minimum depths which from time to time obtain at the entrance, or, in other words, on the bar at the mouth of the Buller River.

At the end of the previous financial year the mean depth over the usually reckoned area of 1,100 ft. by 600 ft. was 15 ft. at L.W.O.S.T., which was a little better than at the commencement of the year. The least or minimum depth at the close of the same year was 10 ft. 9 in. also at L.W.O.S.T., which also was a little better than at the beginning of the year.

During the first month in this past year, although at one stage better bar-depths were recorded, the extreme least depth and the average of mean depths for the month fell a little from those existing at the close of the previous year (as quoted above), being 10 ft. 6 in. and 14 ft. 2 in. respectively.

For the next six months the depths fluctuated, but by December an excellent state at the entrance was gained, with a least depth of 14 ft. 6 in. and a mean depth of 16 ft. 3 in. Unfortunately, this good state was not maintained, and at the close of the period the poorest depths during the year, both least and average, were recorded—viz., 9 ft. 3 in. and 12 ft. 8 in. respectively.

During the last year the average working depth on the bar at high water was 22 ft. 3 in., which is not as good as the 22 ft. 8 in. for the preceding year, yet still much better than the 20 ft. 10 in. and 20 ft. recorded for the respective years previous again.

The average working depth over the year in the river—i.e., from the wharves to the bar—at high water was 23 ft. 10 in., as against 24 ft. 6 in. for 1936–37, 23 ft. 6 in. for 1935–36, and 24 ft. for 1934–35. At the close of the year the average was 22 ft. 5 in., as against 24 ft. 9 in. at the beginning of the year. Comparative soundings taken in October and March indicate that from the lower beacon to the old flagstaff the river has shoaled about 9 in., but that from the latter point to past the gauge clock the shoaling was about 4 ft. Some 63,000 cubic yards of dredgings were lifted from the river by the “Eileen Ward,” mainly between June and November, as against some 216,000 during 1936–37.

Dredging operations were again confined to the drag-suction dredger “Eileen Ward,” though, due to overhaul and repairs, the vessel worked during seven months of the year only. During such seven months, however, the dredging performance was relatively good, some 240,000 cubic yards of material being lifted from the bar, as against 268,000 cubic yards during the previous year.

The dredger went to Wellington in May on annual overhaul and did not recommence dredging until late in June. The vessel went out of commission again on the occasion of the Christmas and New Year holidays, and was then subject to annual survey again, when, as a result of defective rivets being found in the boilers, the vessel was towed to Wellington for major repairs, and at the close of the year the “Ruby Seddon,” a smaller dredger of similar type which had been laid up for some years, was being prepared for recommissioning.

Owing to the length of time which the “Eileen Ward” was out of commission due to repairs and overhaul generally, the total amount of dredging of all classes carried out was only 384,320 cubic yards, as against 535,105 cubic yards during the previous year, but I would point out that the dredger was not docked during last year and consequently more extensive work had to be carried out during this period, which accounts for the somewhat unfavourable comparison in dredging returns.