

1886.
NEW ZEALAND.

MARINE DEPARTMENT

(ANNUAL REPORT OF THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 1st June, 1886.

I do myself the honour to submit the following report of this department for the year ended on the 31st March last:—

LIGHTHOUSES, ETC.—No addition has been made to the number of lighthouses under the control of this department, which are twenty-nine in number, as stated in last report. These lighthouses have been maintained in good order, necessary repairs having been executed to several of them. Pencarrow Head light was reported as having been out for a short time on the 15th May, 1885; on inquiry it was found that this was caused by a slight accident to the machinery of the lamp; but, as the principal keeper, who was on watch, did not appear to have been sufficiently vigilant, he was fined and reprimanded. Shortly afterwards, the same keeper reported that he had allowed the lamp to go out. This occurred just after his resignation had been sent in and accepted. He was, of course, relieved as soon as possible. At Moko Hinou the keeper on watch on the 28th March went to sleep, and the light became stationary from the weight having run down. The keeper, who was a probationer, was at once dismissed. A similar occurrence also took place at Waipapapa Point on the 29th July last. In this case, too, the keeper on watch was a probationer. He was also dismissed. During the year one principal keeper resigned; the services of two were dispensed with on account of bad health, one of whom was paid compensation; the other retired on a pension, and I regret to say that he (Principal Keeper R. J. Campbell) died shortly afterwards. Two probationary keepers mentioned were dismissed; five assistant-keepers were appointed during the same period.

Bean Rock.—The stonework that protects the foundation of this lighthouse was again damaged by the easterly gale of the 15th July last, necessitating extensive repairs; these were carried out, together with those effected after the damage done by the gale in March, 1885, at the cost of £195 6s. 2d. It is hoped that the foundation has now been made permanently secure. The surface of the foundations, being dry at low tide, affords a suitable bed for rock-oysters, a quantity of which have from time to time been planted among the interstices of the stonework, in the expectation that they will, in the course of a few years, spread over the entire surface and bind it together.

Puysegur Point.—Owing to the very wet and boisterous climate at this station, it was found that the ordinary weatherboards with which the tower was covered would not keep out the wet; consequently it was found necessary to re-cover the tower. This was done with diagonal boarding, overlaid with tarred felt, and an outer covering of 1½ in. totara boards, with a slip-tongue of galvanized hoop-iron. It is believed that the tower will now be quite weatherproof. The work was completed at the end of March; but many of the accounts in connection with it were not received until after the end of the financial year.

Centre Island.—Electric bells for calling keepers have been fitted at this station.

Cape Foulwind.—Electric bells for calling keepers have also been fitted at this station.

Dog Island.—A new finial for the lightning-conductor has been fixed, and a new centre for one of the holophotes, which was accidentally broken, has been procured from Paris, and fitted in position.

Farewell Spit.—This station is now connected by telephone with the telegraph system of the colony. Arrangements have been made to have watch kept from the tower during the whole of the day, so that the signals made by vessels wishing to communicate by telegraph may be duly observed.

Planting.—Steps were taken last year to plant pine-trees of various kinds at the lighthouse stations where there is no bush at hand; many of these trees have grown well, and it is proposed to plant a number more this winter. Care has been taken that these trees are planted in such positions that they cannot possibly interfere with the exhibition of the light; and in time they will afford valuable shelter, and will be useful in supplying firewood.

Cuvier Island.—An order has been sent Home for the apparatus and lantern for this lighthouse. It is to be a first-order revolving white light, attaining its greatest brilliancy once every thirty seconds. As soon as the land has been acquired it is proposed to begin the erection of the tower and buildings.