

PORT OF TIMARU.

THE Port of Timaru, which is the natural outlet of the large and fertile district of South Canterbury, whose export business in a few years will equal that of any port in New Zealand, is situated at a slight projection of the coast-line at the south-west extremity of the Ninety-Mile Beach, south of Banks Peninsula. The town of Timaru stands near the sea-shore, partly on a rise. The lighthouse and flagstaff (only 40ft apart) are on a cliff towards the north end of the town, in latitude 44° 23' S., longitude 171° 17' 20" E. The breakwater, which is now 2,100ft. long, and is rapidly being pushed seawards, extends from the beach in a N.E. by N. direction, and will be seen when viewed from the sea to be in a line with the flagstaff.

The coast-line from Banks Peninsula to Timaru is low, and cannot be seen in thick weather or by night until close in with the breakers, while southwards of the Town of Timaru the cliffs are from 30ft. to 50ft. high. This is a sure guide to Timaru, viz., low shingle beach northward, moderately high cliffs and headlands to the southward.

If the weather is clear, the high mountain range will be seen behind Timaru long before the coast-line has risen. Burke's Pass, a remarkable gorge, almost directly behind Timaru, is a good landmark, showing a distinct gap, and should be steered for on a course W.S.W. magnetic; the cliffs above mentioned will prevent any mistake.

Directions.—Vessels bound for Timaru, after rounding Banks Peninsula, should steer S.W. by W. southerly unless the wind be strong from E.S.E., which causes an inset, when it is necessary to keep three-quarters of a point more southerly.

The shore from the end of the breakwater to Patiti Point, a long mile, S.S.E., is fronted by sand and shoal patches, with outlying reefs of rocks and kelp, always breaking, the reef extending nearly two-thirds of a mile direct to seaward from Patiti Point, and one and a half miles to the south-east from the breakwater at Timaru. The reef off Patiti Point runs out a quarter of a mile farther than is marked on the charts, and should have a wide berth.

From Patiti Point southward the coast is again formed of low cliffs, fronted by a shingle beach, and extends thirty miles in a south direction to Waitangi (chart, Waitaki) River, with several small streams intervening. A high mountain range, 3,500ft. (the Hunter Hills), approach within a few miles of the coast, between Timaru and Waitaki River.

The Timaru lighthouse is 30ft. high; it is built of wood and painted white. The light is a fixed white light of the fifth order, dioptric, and shows a green sector of 45° (four points) from W. to S.W., magnetic, as viewed from seaward. It stands 85ft. above the sea-level, and, allowing 15ft. for the height of the observer's eye, should be visible in clear weather at a distance of fourteen nautical miles.

The GREEN LIGHT is intended as a guide to vessels approaching Timaru during the night. Masters of vessels are particularly cautioned that on nearing the port, and while lying at anchor, they must not lose sight of the green light; also, that while under way, the lead-line should always be kept going.

Two red lights, 10ft. apart, are exhibited from the outer end of the breakwater, when weather permits, and show all round to seawards.

The accommodation for shipping under the shelter of the breakwater is now very considerable, and is being rapidly increased as the work extends. Moorings are laid down, to which several vessels can be well secured, moored head and stern. There are besides about 1500ft. available wharfage for berthing vessels. The depth of water is from 10ft. to 23ft. at low-water spring-tides, and vessels drawing up to 19ft. are discharged and loaded with great facility, as the railway runs the whole length of the wharf, and steam cranes are always available.

In order to give despatch to sailing-vessels the Harbour Board maintains a powerful tug, of 56 h.p. nominal.

The towage rates have been made exceedingly liberal, to induce masters of vessels to avail themselves to the utmost of the services of the tug.

Signals.—The New Zealand General Signals are used.

It has been notified by the Harbourmaster that vessels frequenting the port should be provided with at least one extra heavy anchor and strong cable, and that vessels of large tonnage, say 800 tons register and over, must not anchor in less than seven fathoms of water, the flagstaff bearing W.S.W. Vessels of less tonnage may anchor closer in on the same bearing, but not within a mile and a half of the breakwater, and in no case must approach the breakwater or moorings without permission, in consequence of the rapid extension of the harbour works.

On the plan are marked the best anchorages for all classes of vessels, also the bearings from the lighthouse. High water, full and change, at 3h. 30min.; spring tides, rise and fall, 6ft. 6in.

Shipping inwards at Port of Timaru—

Year 1884	...	...	282 vessels	...	...	63,133 tons register.
" 1885	...	...	332 "	...	...	90,109 "
" 1886	...	...	363 "	...	...	98,756 "

Principal Exports, year 1886—

Wool	...	...	...	...	...	22,646 bales.
Wheat	...	...	...	...	...	39,388 sacks.
Oats	...	...	...	...	...	91,513 "
Flour	...	...	...	...	...	136,093 "
Bran and sharps	...	...	...	...	...	73,572 "
Potatoes	...	...	...	...	...	9,890 "
Chaff	...	...	...	...	...	9,656 "
Frozen mutton	...	...	...	...	...	33,032 carcasses.

Revenue from Wharfage and Harbour Charges—

Year	£	s.	d.
1879
1880
1881
1882
1883
1884
1885
1886

The harbour district includes the Counties of Geraldine and Mackenzie, and the following Ridings of the Waimate County, namely, Pareora, Otaio, Makikihi, Deep Creek, and part of Waibao, the Borough of Timaru, and the Town Districts of Geraldine, Temuka, and Arowhenua. The area of the district is 2,718,800 acres. Its rateable value under Government assessment is £6,634,000. Population, 24,000.

The Harbour Board has a right of rating over the property in the harbour district in the event of its revenue being insufficient to meet the interest on money borrowed for harbour works. There has up to the present time been no need to levy any rates, the revenue being sufficient for all purposes.

Timaru, 31st March, 1887.

J. H. SUTTER,
Chairman, Timaru Harbour Board.