

Fairchild, and its exact position notified to the Admiralty for insertion in charts of the locality. The same course was taken with reference to a rock outside Auckland Harbour, reported by the master of the "Zeno." The Raglan County Council has been declared to be a Harbour Board for Raglan Harbour, and Stewart Island County Council for Half-moon and Horseshoe Bays. At the request of the Greymouth Harbour Board the limits of the Greymouth Pilotage District were defined. The Motueka County Council having expressed a desire for a skilled report on the present condition of Motueka Harbour, Mr. P. S. Hay, C.E., was instructed to make a report, a copy of which was forwarded to the Council. At Opunake Mr. F. Des Forges has been appointed signalman, in place of Mr. Ebbett, deceased. Wharves at Mangapai, Maungakaramea, and Parua Bay, in Whangarei Harbour, were repaired, at a cost of £147 3s. 6d., which was paid out of a sum voted for the purpose last session. The Mongonui County Council received the sum of £160 voted for repairs to the wharf at Mongonui. A sum of £115, appropriated for the erection of a wharf at Te Toro Point, Manukau Harbour, will be handed over to the Waipipi Road Board as soon as the erection is completed. At Whangateau Harbour a wharf is being erected by the Public Works Department. A sum of £300 was appropriated for this work last session, but not expended, and Parliament will be asked to renew the vote this year. A sum of £120 appropriated last session for repairs to the breastwork in Nelson Harbour has been found to be insufficient, and, consequently, Parliament will be asked to vote an additional £60. This work is now being carried out. Repairs to the training-wall in Wairau River have been effected by the River Board out of funds voted for the purpose.

Weather-reporting.—Captain Edwin has continued to carry out the duties in connection with weather-reporting with zeal and efficiency. He also acts as Examiner of Masters and Mates, in conjunction with Captain Johnson.

Oyster-fisheries.—It has not been deemed advisable to open the oyster-beds in Manukau and Kaipara Harbours, as it is believed that much better results would be obtained if the beds were subdivided, and leased in small areas under suitable regulations. Legislative authority will be sought this session to enable this to be done. The Harbourmasters at Kaipara and Manukau have been appointed Inspectors of Oyster-fisheries. Licenses have been applied for to occupy foreshore for oyster-culture at Sumner, Porirua, and Nelson, but no actual issue of a license has as yet taken place.

In the Northern Oyster-fishery, which extends from Whangaruru Harbour to the North Cape, the duties of seeing that the law is not infringed have been efficiently performed by the Inspector, Mr. H. Stephenson; and Mr. J. Munro, the Inspector at Whangarei, has also carried out his duties in an efficient manner.

Fisheries Conservation.—In September last a conviction was obtained against the master of the p.s. "Result," a steam-trawler, for having in his possession fish under the regulation size. This decision was upset, on appeal to the Supreme Court, because the Crown was unable to dispute the allegation of the defendant that the fish were caught seven miles off the coast, and therefore not in New Zealand waters. An alteration in the law appears to be necessary, making it an offence to have in possession undersized fish, wherever caught. This matter is now under consideration.

The Inspector of Fisheries at Hokitika has been successful in putting a stop to the use of undersized nets at that place. He has drawn attention to his inability under the present law to seize illegal nets unless he finds them actually in use.*

An Inspector has been appointed for the Wellington district, at a small remuneration, to aid the police in seeing that the law relating to fisheries is observed.

In March, 1893, the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the size at which flounders should be taken at Lake Ellesmere reported that the minimum size should be 10in., and that the mesh of the nets should be not less than 5in., the nets being hung on the square.†

Government Steamers.—S.s. "Hinemoa": In addition to the usual lighthouse work, the "Hinemoa" made two voyages to the Auckland Islands—one in May and the other in November. In February she was utilised for a trip to Milford Sound, given to the delegates from other colonies attending the Postal Conference held in this colony. In March and April she made a trip to Rarotonga with His Excellency the Governor, and during the trip she called at the Kermadec Islands, where Captain Fairchild inspected the dépôts for castaways, which were found to be in good order. At Antipodes Island, in November, seven seamen, shipwrecked from the ship "Spirit of the Dawn," bound from Rangoon to Talcahuano, were discovered in a destitute condition, although at another part of the island the New Zealand Government's provision dépôt contained everything requisite for their comfort. To prevent this for the future, if possible, notices, directing to the dépôt, have been placed in different parts of the islands on which dépôts are established, and the Admiralty has been requested to note the existence of the dépôt on charts of the South Pacific.

Towards the end of the year it was rumoured that a Norwegian auxiliary steam-vessel, the "Antarctic," was destined for seal-catching at the Auckland Islands, and, as a close season had been declared for seals, the "Hinemoa" was despatched in April to safeguard the interests of persons in New Zealand who were interested in the preservation of the seals. When the "Hinemoa" arrived it was found that the "Antarctic" had preceded her by about two hours. The master was made aware of the law bearing on the question of taking of seals in New Zealand waters, and he promised not to infringe them. The "Hinemoa" remained until the "Antarctic" took her departure, but it was subsequently deemed advisable to ask the Admiral of the station to despatch

* In 1894 a regulation was made which will meet this difficulty.

† Since the expiration of the year now reported on, the fishermen have been notified that the recommendation of the Commission will be given effect to on the expiration of twelve months from the 1st July. This will give time for getting new nets of the proper size, and the using-up of those now on hand.