

SICK AND INJURED SEAMEN

The total amount paid by shipowners to sick and injured seamen, under the provisions of the Shipping and Seamen Act, 1908, and Amendments, was £19,803 Os. 8d., as against £19,529 5s. 7d. for the previous year, an increase of £273 15s. 1d.

REGISTRATION OF SHIPS

On the 31st December, 1949, there were on the Register of Vessels in the Dominion 44 sailing-vessels of 3,525 net tons register, 113 steamers of 61,282 net tons register, and 325 motor-vessels of 40,797 net tons register, as compared with 43 sailing-vessels of 3,515 net tons register, 122 steamers of 64,052 net tons register, and 308 motor-vessels of 32,603 net tons register at the end of the previous year.

The number of seamen employed on board was 2,913, as compared with 2,637 for the year 1948.

WESTPORT HARBOUR

In preparing annual reports on Westport Harbour it is customary to reiterate that good trading results are dependent mainly upon a satisfactory working depth on the bar. The geographical situation of the harbour, placed as it is at the mouth of the Buller River, renders it subject to several factors such as varying river flow, sets, sea and wind conditions, and ocean current, all of which, singly or in combination, can have a beneficial or a detrimental effect on the working depth at the entrance.

As laden vessels leave the port at or near time of high water it is the high-water depth on the bar which governs the effective working of the port. During the year now under review—*i.e.*, 1st April, 1949, to 31st March, 1950—the average for the year of the “month by month” mean of daily high-water depths was 21 ft. 5 in.

Although, generally speaking, the working depth was not as good as the 22 ft. 8 in. average for the previous year, it was better than that recorded for the previous six years, when trade figures were better. Moreover, the bar depth was fairly constant over the whole year, there being no particularly long spells of either very good or very bad bar depth.

Some restricted loadings were necessary during the first ten days of October owing to bar condition, yet this had no obvious detrimental effect on the coal shipments. The coastal vessels made more trips with lighter loads, and October was one of the best months of the year from point of view of number of ships and tonnage exported.

The number of days on which depth obtained on the bar at high water during the years stated (ended 31st March) are as set out in the following table:—

Depth.	1931.	1939.	1942.	1944.	1945.	1946.	1947.	1948.	1949.	1950.
14'-16'	1	..	2	..	12
16'-18'	..	25	2	1	39	23	35	..	16	3
18'-20'	..	132	88	33	96	69	124	35	52	31
20'-22'	..	165	149	181	150	142	117	151	154	97
22'-24'	..	43	115	143	75	87	62	126	116	150
24'-26'	11	7	5	43	24	51	13	77
26'-28'	1	1	2	3	6
Over 28'	1	..
Mean for year ..	20' 2"	21' 3"	21' 9"	20' 8"	21' 4"	20' 8"	22' 2"	21' 2"	22' 8"	21' 5"