

In respect to the same years this next table sets down the coal shipments for such years in relation to the mean of high water bar depths for those years :--

Year.	Mean of High-water Depths on Bar.	Total Coal Shipments (Tons).
	Ft. in.	
1931	20 2	513,500
1939	21 3	426,400
1942	21 9	487,500
1944	20 8	401,300
1945	21 4	402,000
1946	20 8	385,300
1947	22 2	384,800
1948	21 2	382,400
1949	22 8	326,400
1950	21 5	308,784

The continued decline in coal shipments since 1942 is to be noted. In my report for last year I commented upon this, and the even more pronounced fall in shipments this past year would suggest the need for further comment. In the first place there was some loss as result of a complete stoppage of output from the major mine in the district, the Stockton State Mine, which stoppage, due to an industrial dispute, extended for just on a month, but even then this was not a major cause of the decline in shipments.

Developmental work at the mines which was retarded during the war years is in progress. Large and modern machines are being installed at the open-cast mines, and an aerial ropeway is being constructed to convey the coal from the high elevation of the workings to the low coastal level, and when this work is completed, together with the opening up of new coal areas, increased output should reflect very favourably in substantial recovery to the trade of the port.

Three new colliers—“Kaitangata,” “Kaitawa,” and “Konui” have been added to the Union Steam Ship Co.’s collier fleet, together with the Anchor Shipping Co.’s “Puriri,” in replacement of several vessels which had served the trade for many years, and, due to their more efficient ability, such new vessels should well cope with the shipments demands which improved mines output will create, although delays in despatch and turnaround of colliers at outer ports and *en route* can continue at times to interfere with collier schedules, with consequent disruption to efficient flow of coal from the mines.

Coal railed to the east coast of the South Island for the year totalled 115,868 tons, as compared with about 129,000 tons last year.

One overseas shipment of bunker and cargo coal was made during the year when s.s. “Kaikorai,” on sale to China, loaded 2,201 tons cargo coal and 1,250 tons bunkers. Timber shipments were 233,530 superficial feet, compared with 1,092,438 superficial feet for the previous year. This reduction was brought about by increased local demand and quantity railed to the east coast.

During the year 171 (208) vessels, aggregating 148,642 (152,789) tons net register, departed from the port, the figures in parentheses being those corresponding for the previous year. “In and Out” totals for the year were 344 (418) vessels, aggregating 296,666 (307,340) tons net register.

The bar suction dredger “Eileen Ward” worked consistently throughout the year, removing 419,080 cubic yards from the bar, and 106,580 cubic yards from the fairway and berthage area.

Having completed necessary maintenance dredging in the floating basin, the ladder-dredger “Maui” commenced operations in the berthage area, where shoaling had taken place during the absence of the vessel at Castlecliff. This dredger lifted and dumped at sea 15,300 cubic yards of spoil from the floating basin and 93,900 cubic yards from the berthage area.