

being to fill a vacancy which existed at the beginning of the year, one in consequence of the exhibition of Jack's Point light, and nine to fill the vacancies caused by the before-mentioned retirement and resignations.

The amount of light dues collected during the year was £29,310 16s. 3d., as compared with £29,116 0s. 11d. during the previous year. Attached is a table showing the amount collected at each port.

*Harbours.*—The staff at the ports under the control of this Department have performed their duties in a satisfactory manner, and the buoys and beacons in the various harbours have been kept in good order. The two leading beacons at the entrance to Tairua Harbour have been washed away, and an attempt was made by Captain Bollons, of the "Hinemoa," to replace them in February last, but the sea was too rough. They will, however, be replaced when the "Hinemoa" makes her northern trip next month, and two buoys will be laid down to mark banks formed from ballast which vessels have deposited in the harbour. Steps are being taken to erect two new leading beacons at Kawhia, as the channel over the bar has changed so much that the present beacons have been rendered unserviceable.

Owing to change in the channel at the entrance to Kaipara Harbour, the old leading beacons became useless, and new beacons have been erected to guide in the new channel. The "Hinemoa" has not had time to overhaul some of the smaller buoys in this harbour, and therefore the Harbourmaster will arrange for it to be done by a local steamer. The houses at the old pilot-station at Pouto, which are occupied by the Principal Lightkeeper's wife and family and by the chief boatman, need some repairs, which will be carried out shortly.

Repairs to the flagstaff at Hokianga are required owing to the decay of the staff from age, and an oil-launch would be very useful to the Harbourmaster, as, owing to the increasing shipping and the building of new sawmills, it is necessary that he should be able to get about to the various parts of this extensive harbour more than he is able to do in the pilot-boat. Complaint has been made by shipmasters that the port light at the signal-station is not powerful enough, and in order to endeavour to improve it a reflector has been fitted into it, which it is hoped will have the effect of making the light visible at a greater distance.

The signalman's and boatman's houses at Manukau South Head have had some necessary repairs done to them. A good deal of the face of the cliff on which the signalman's house and the flagstaff stand, being composed of sand, has blown away, and in order to stop the erosion the Harbourmaster has planted marram-grass and lupins on the face, and these are having a good effect. A new beacon is required at the bend of the channel near Shag Point, to replace one that was blown down, and tenders are now being invited for its erection. Wharves have been erected at Orua Bay and Graham's Beach, in Manukau Harbour, by the Awhitu Road Board, grants for the purpose having been made by this Department.

New leading beacons are required at the entrance to West Wanganui Inlet, where the shipping trade is increasing owing to the erection of sawmills and flax-mills at that place. Twenty beacons have been erected in the inlet to mark the channel.

The flagstaff at Karamea being too far away from the entrance to the river, it was decided to move it to a better position; but on examination it was found to be too much decayed to be worth moving. A new staff has therefore been erected on the North Head at the entrance, in a position from where vessels can be better guided in and out of the river. The flag-box has been moved to the new site, and a hut for the shelter of the signalman has been put up. The work of removing some snags which caused the bed of the river to silt up and turned the water down the Otumahana outlet is being carried out, and when completed it will have the effect of causing the water to go down the proper channel, which will improve it for navigation.

A regulation has been made regarding the anchor lights to be exhibited by vessels when lying in harbours and by vessels which are aground in or near a fairway.

The sum of £1,639 12s. 7d. has been collected for pilotage and port charges in respect of harbours under the control of this Department, as compared with £1,914 15s. 5d. collected during the previous year.

A large number of plans of harbour-works have been approved by the Governor in Council, and licenses have been granted for the occupation of sites for wharves and other works. A return showing such works and licenses is appended hereto.

*Fisheries.*—Regulations have been issued under "The Sea-fisheries Act, 1894," as amended by the Act of 1903, providing for the registration of sea-fishing boats and boats used in taking oysters; and this, combined with the licensing of these boats, enables them to be kept under better control. The registration remains in force so long as a boat belongs to the same owner, but the licenses are annual. The regulations came into force on the 1st July last, and a return showing the number of boats registered and licensed up to the end of December last is appended hereto.

The regulations as to the size of mesh of fishing-nets and the mode of measuring them have been under review, and the Chief Inspector has interviewed fishermen in various parts of the colony regarding them, with the result that new regulations have been made which provide that the mesh of net or seine is to be not less than 2½ in., unless the net is a *bonâ fide* flounder set-net, mullet, garfish, or herring net. Set-nets for flounders are to have a mesh not less than 4 in., garfish-nets 1 in., herring-nets 1½ in., and mullet-nets used in the North Island 3½ in. The measurement is to be made between knot and knot of opposite corners, instead of diagonally as hitherto.

In order to give the fishermen time to use up the nets which they had when the new regulations were made, it was provided by the Order in Council making them that they are not to come into force until the 1st January next.

In some of the Canterbury rivers there has been a good deal of trouble in dealing with white-bait fishermen who use unlawful means to prevent the fish going further up the river than where they are fishing, to the detriment of men fishing higher up. Proceedings have been taken and