

during the last five years, but which would have been carried out under normal conditions. So far as additional buildings are concerned, these will be deferred until the difficulties in connection with the erection of houses and schools have been overcome, or, at all events, greatly relieved. Notwithstanding this, many improvements have been carried out—for instance, at Tongariro Park, Waitomo Caves, and on the Milford Sound Track. In addition, the Government has rendered financial assistance in many cases to local authorities and other bodies in connection with the development of local tourist resorts. In spite of the shortage of shipping facilities the different Government tourist resorts have been extremely well patronized, and the year under review has been the best for many years past. At Waitomo over six thousand people visited the caves during the past year.

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

LIGHTHOUSES.

It has been decided to place lights on Gable End Foreland, and on Ohena Island, near the Mercury Islands. The necessary automatic lights have been ordered for these places, also for a beacon in the Helensville River.

The oil-burning lights at Tiritiri and Taiaroa Head will be converted into automatic, unwatched, flashing lights as soon as the necessary apparatus, which has been ordered, comes to hand.

HARBOURS.

Plans of a large number of works to be carried out by Harbour Boards have been approved; and the buoys and beacons in the harbours controlled by the Department have been overhauled, cleaned, and painted, and new moorings put down where required.

FISHERIES.

It is the desire of the Government to encourage the fishing industry by affording financial assistance in providing cold storage and up-to-date fishing-vessels and gear. Regulations have been prepared under the authority of the Fishing Industry Promotion Act of last session enabling this to be done.

GOVERNMENT STEAMERS.

S.s. "Hinemoa."—This vessel has acted as tender to the various lighthouses and coastal buoys and beacons controlled by the Department.

S.s. "Tutanekai."—This vessel has been employed only occasionally, but left port in February last, at the urgent request of the Government of Fiji, with an armed contingent of the New Zealand Permanent Force in order to assist in protecting the lives of the European population. The "Tutanekai" arrived at an opportune time, and her mere presence effectively controlled the situation. The thanks of the Fiji Government were most cordially expressed for the assistance granted by the New Zealand Government towards quelling an incipient revolution.

S.s. "Rama" (formerly H.M.S. "Torch.")—This vessel, which was on loan to the Commonwealth Government for service during the war, has been sold to a New Zealand fishing company, and will be employed in trade between New Zealand and the Chatham Islands.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

The principal public works upon which expenditure is concentrated at present are—(1) Railway-construction; (2) construction and maintenance of main roads; (3) development of hydro-electric power.

Railway-lines of paramount importance to the whole Dominion are being pushed forward, as the necessity is recognized of concentrating all available material, machinery, and staff on certain lines until they are completed.