

Hokitika.—During the year there was practically no sea fishing carried on from this port. The fishing which was done consisted of netting for flounders and herrings in the tidal estuary, and white-baiting. The Inspector reports good catches of whitebait during the season, and about one hundred and twenty persons fished for whitebait during the year.

Kaikoura.—The quantity of fish caught shows an increase on the previous year's operations, and market fish of all kinds were plentiful. The owners of the local whaling-stations have had a poor season, only six humpback whales being taken, against sixteen for the season 1922.

Rangiora.—The Inspector states that fishing for the past year has been very poor. All of the men engaged on the local fishing-grounds, except two, have been out working on farms. Little or no fishing has been done at Salt Water Creek since the whitebait season closed.

Kaipoi.—The catch of fish for the year shows a considerable increase. Whitebait were fairly plentiful during the season, and fishermen as a rule earned good money.

Southbridge (Lake Ellesmere).—The quantity of fish taken shows an increase on the previous year.

Lyttelton.—The quantity of fish caught on the local fishing-grounds shows a considerable decrease on the two years' previous catches. In 1922 the quantity brought in was 6,200 cwt., as against 2,250 cwt. for the past year.

Akaroa.—Fish have been fairly plentiful. The quantity brought in during the year compares favourably with the three previous seasons.

Timaru.—Fish of all kinds have been plentiful on the usual fishing-grounds during most of the year, but strong easterly gales hindered fishing operations, and affected the fishermen's earnings, and caused a decrease in the quantity of fish brought in.

Oamaru.—The report received from the Collector states that compared with the previous year the past year shows a marked decrease in the total quantity of fish landed. Groper was fairly plentiful, but all other kinds of fish showed a decided decrease, particularly red cod. The fishermen report that the last six months were the worst for fishing for many years. Owing to high winds and rough weather the boats were able to go out only two or three times within the week.

Moeraki.—The total quantity of fish landed shows a slight decrease on the previous year. Groper were not so plentiful, and red cod also showed a marked falling-off, whereas blue cod shows an increase, and ling and crayfish were also more plentiful.

Dunedin.—Fair catches of all round fish have been taken by the line fishermen for the greater part of the year, and on practically every occasion groper and kingfish have brought high prices. Fish have been plentiful throughout the year. The trawling-fleet have taken large quantities of flat and round fish for ten months, but for two months towards the end of the year exceptionally poor catches were taken. The seine fishermen have taken fair quantities of flounders, and on a good many occasions large quantities of trevally. All outlying ports have been visited during the year, and at these places fishermen report having had a good season.

Invercargill.—Fish have been plentiful on the fishing-grounds, but the supply brought in has been somewhat irregular on account of unfavourable weather through the spring and early summer months.

Bluff.—Fishermen report a good season for blue cod, and also other market fish were taken in similar quantities to previous years. Oysters were plentiful, and good catches were made by the dredging-vessels on the Foveaux Strait beds. The re-establishment of a regular intercolonial service has been favourable to the export of fish and oysters to Melbourne.

Stewart Island.—The Inspector at Half-moon Bay reports that the fishing season was a fairly good one for the fishermen. Blue cod were fairly plentiful, and good prices were obtained for their catches.

Chatham Islands.—The Inspector reports that the year has not been a good one for the fishing industry. This, however, was not due to the scarcity of fish, which I am pleased to say were extremely abundant, but to the condition of the market. As a consequence of the bad market and the large supplies of fish on hand, fishing ceased, and the fish-freezing works closed down at the end of July, 1922, and did not recommence until the end of February of the present year. I am very pleased, however, to be able to report that the period of depression and inactivity in connection with the fishing industry at these islands has only been temporary, and present prospects are far more promising than they have been for several years. This improvement I believe to be due to the stabilization of prices and good demand for the kind of fish caught here.

RETURNS.

The following returns and reports are appended herewith :—

- (1.) The various kinds of fish caught, and approximately the total quantities and value of fish landed at the different ports, for the year ended 31st March, 1923.
- (2.) The total quantity of oysters taken from the different beds, the quantity disposed of in the Dominion, the quantity exported, and total value.
- (3.) The total quantity and value of fish imported into and exported from New Zealand during the year ended 31st December, 1922.
- (4.) The number of steam trawlers, oil-engine trawlers, and other vessels employed in net and line fishing, with the number of fishermen employed, and approximately the total number of persons engaged in the fishing industry at each port, for the year ended 31st March, 1923.
- (5.) The number and kinds of whales taken at each whaling-station, and the quantity and value of oil, bonedust, or fertilizer produced.
- (6.) Reports with regard to the run and catches of quinnat salmon by anglers from Constable Berry, Glenavy; Inspector Main, Temuka; Mr. Pigott, Timaru; and Mr. Hope, Christchurch.