

Our Industries: Portland Cement.

No. XXVIII.

New Zealand Portland Cement.

At the present time, when so much interest is being exhibited by the keenest men of the day in concrete construction, a short history of the development of one of the foremost cement manufacturing concerns in the Dominion will, no doubt, prove of interest to our readers.

The works of the New Zealand Portland Cement Co., Ltd., situated at Limestone Island, Whangarei, about 80 miles north of Auckland, are a striking example of what can be done by steady perseverance and care.

Some year ago, when this company first took over the limestone works, the cement industry was very far from reaching the

is to be congratulated on having a model modern plant with a capacity of over 2000 tons per month output.

One would think that the directors of the company would rest contented, satisfied with the progress made. But no sooner had the duplication of the plant been completed than it was found necessary to again enlarge the works, and the company, at the present time, have under order the necessary plant to increase the output of the works to over 3600 tons per month.

In order to carry out these works of development money was needed, and in July last 40,000 new shares were placed on the market, the list being over subscribed before the day on which applications closed. The healthy position of the

Then again, the wharf, works and quarry are all within a stone's throw. At the ferro-concrete wharf, which is the Company's own property, vessels of 3,000 or 4,000 tons can lie and load with safety, and this is another great factor in the success of the Company, as it does away, to a great extent, with the cost of shipping to Auckland and thence transshipping to Southern steamers. Such vessels as the Union Company's "Rakanoa," "Wanaka," "Flora" &c., make regular trips to the Island, and load direct for the South.

At the present time the Company is arranging to increase the wharfage accommodation so as to enable two or more steamers to load at once.

Of course the Directors recognise the fact that in order to handle a plant of this magnitude, it was essential that the man at the head of the works should be an expert in every branch of the business, so about a year ago they sent to the United States, the undoubted home of the industry, and were fortunate in securing the services of a manager who stands in the very front of his profession. Under this gentleman's control the quality of "Crown" Brand Cement has gone ahead by leaps and bounds, and the latest tests, taken at random from the ordinary stocks, show results which have not been exceeded, and in several results not even equalled, by any other cement in the world.

Under such circumstances as the foregoing, it cannot be wondered at that the old fashioned prejudice against Colonial Cement has been entirely broken down, and that "Crown" Brand stands as a guarantee of quality throughout the cement using world.

Such concerns as the Napier Harbor Board, Wellington Harbor Board, Ferro-Concrete Company of Australasia, Ltd., all use "Crown" Brand, and among recent contracts where "Crown" Brand has been used exclusively may be mentioned the Makatote Viaduct, Hamilton Bridge, Wainui Dam (Wellington), Auckland Town Hall, Auckland Freeman's Bay Sewer, Otahuhu Saleyards, and many others.

The Public Works are using "Crown" Brand in most of their works throughout the North Island.



WHARF AT THE N.Z. PORTLAND CEMENT CO.'S WORKS, LIMESTONE ISLAND

stage of development which it has now attained.

Small works, utterly unsuitable for the modern manufacture of cement, had been installed years before, but from these small works was gradually evolved the up-to-date plant which now stands on the same site. Shortly after the present company took it over, a large fire occurred, which, although serious enough at the time, was not altogether an unmixed disaster, for it effectually disposed of the question of how to modernise the old plant. New works were at once installed, and no chance has been overlooked in keeping the plant up to date.

But the work of the management did not stop here. Some two years ago the growing demand for "Crown" brand cement forced upon the directors the necessity for doubling the plant, and so bringing the output up from 1000 to over 2000 tons per month. In this enlargement of the works, unexpected difficulties, which it is not necessary to enumerate, arose, and delayed the completion of the duplication for a long time. At last, however, the difficulties were surmounted, and to-day the Company

company's affairs at the present time is shown by the fact that these new shares are, at the time of writing, at a premium of nearly 100 per cent.

A glance at the two photographs of the works shown herewith will convey to the reader more than mere words can do, the changes that have taken place during the last few years.

The reasons for the great success that has attended the efforts of those interested in the New Zealand Portland Cement Co. may be of interest:—

Firstly, Limestone Island, which is the freehold property of the company, contains about 103 acres (or an estimate of 32,000,000 tons) above high-water mark of what has been described by experts as equal to the best natural hydraulic limestone in the world.

Secondly, this industry is self-contained to a degree that is very seldom met with. The rock limestone that is required for blending with the hydraulic stone is situated within ten minutes steam of the works. The coal supply is only twice that distance away. These facts, as anyone can see, all make for cheapness of production.

Correspondence.

Auckland, March 20, 1909.

(To the Editor PROGRESS.)

Sir,—I have read with pleasure your terse and vigorous article on Phormium Tenax in PROGRESS for this month. I beg leave to congratulate you on what I believe to be the soundness of your views of the situation and your courage in publishing them. You strike a true note in saying that PROGRESS feels elated at the prospect of the approach at some attempt