

APPENDIX.

ANNUAL REPORT ON LIGHTHOUSE WORKS, ETC., BY THE MARINE ENGINEER.

The MARINE ENGINEER to the SECRETARY, Marine Department.

SIR,—

Marine Department, 31st March, 1885.

I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Hon. the Minister having charge of the Marine Department, the annual report on works executed for new lighthouses, and for other works during the year, viz. :—

Kaipara.—The whole of the works in connection with this lighthouse have been completed, and the light was first exhibited on the 1st December, 1884. The light is of the second order, flashing every ten seconds.

French Pass.—All the works have been satisfactorily completed, and the lights were first exhibited on the 1st October, 1884, viz., one light on the mainland, a sixth-order port-light; and a smaller one, a ship's ordinary riding-light, on the beacon.

Jackson's Head.—The beacon described in the last annual report was completed on the 19th April, 1884, and remained intact until the middle of March, 1885, when it was destroyed during a severe storm. It is proposed to replace it by another beacon of different and more substantial design.

Removal of Rocks, Whakatane River.—It is expected that this contract will be completed towards the end of next month.

Light at Eastern Entrance of Hauraki Gulf.—In April, 1884, this locality was inspected with the view of determining the best site for a lighthouse, and Red Mercury and Cuvier Islands were carefully examined, with the result that the latter island seemed to offer the best site for the purpose intended; and a report to this effect was forwarded in June.

I have, &c.,

JOHN BLACKETT,
Marine Engineer.

The Secretary, Marine Department.

ANNUAL REPORT ON INSPECTION OF MACHINERY.

The CHIEF INSPECTOR OF MACHINERY to the SECRETARY, Marine Department.

SIR,—

Office of Chief Inspector of Machinery, Wellington, 4th June, 1885.

I have the honour to submit the eleventh annual report on the working of the Inspection of Machinery Acts during the year ended the 31st March, 1885.

The number of boilers inspected during the year was 1,475. Of this number, 41 were found dangerous and 139 more or less defective. The accompanying reports of the District Inspectors fully explain the nature and extent of such defects.

Accidents to life or limb to men working about machinery have materially decreased during the year as compared with former years, and will, I feel sure, continue to do so, as in each year there is a less number of dangerous parts of machinery requiring the attention of the Inspectors; all such parts being most securely fenced. Boilers also are much better looked after, and their fittings are kept in better order, so lessening the risk of accidents in connection with them. At the same time, with all the precautions possible, accidents will happen; as, for instance, in the case of a circular saw breaking, which no inspection could prevent. In such cases, the only safeguards are care and attention on the part of the men, who have sole charge of this kind of machinery.

All new boilers are, when the Inspectors' time will admit, examined during construction at the makers' yards. I attach great importance to this portion of the Inspectors' duties, as any defects can be pointed out and rectified before a boiler is fixed into its place for work. I may further state that the hydraulic test is applied to all new boilers to twice the working pressure.

I have much pleasure in reporting that no boiler explosion has taken place in the colony during the year. This, I think, is very satisfactory, and is doubtless due, in a great measure, to the zeal and intelligence of the Inspectors. As compared with Great Britain this result is very marked. There, during last year, 49 explosions took place, causing 31 deaths and 65 cases of personal injury. This comparison, I consider, shows that our system of Government inspection is preferable to and a safer guarantee against explosions than any voluntary system. In nearly all the cases of explosion above referred to the boilers were inspected by the Inspectors or agents of some kind of insurance or guarantee companies. During the past ten years five persons have met their death by the explosion of four boilers in New Zealand, while in England during the same period 421 boilers exploded, causing 626 deaths and 830 cases of personal injury.

It has been urged that men employed to fire a boiler on land should be required to pass an examination and hold a certificate; but to this it is objected that the owner should be held responsible, as in most cases of explosion the owners appear to be at fault. A good boiler, well equipped, is a simple machine to manage, and requires only ordinary care on the part of the man who has charge of it. I propose issuing to all boiler-owners plain printed instructions for the use of the men having charge of boilers. This course, it appears to me, will be more satisfactory than attempting to issue certificates.