

steam, burnt 1,547 tons of New Zealand coal, landed 2,557 tons of cargo, and cleaned and overhauled 218 buoys.

Examination of Masters, Mates, and Engineers.—One hundred and seventeen candidates passed their examination for certificates of competency, and twenty-seven failed. Of those who passed seventy-two were masters, mates, and engineers of sea-going vessels; and forty-five were masters and engineers of river-steamers. There were no failures to pass the colour-test examination reported during the year. Four certificates of service were issued during the year, two being for the Home and two for the foreign trade. New regulations for the examination of masters, mates, and engineers were made in conformity with the latest regulations made by the Board of Trade. The principal alteration in those for masters and mates is that candidates are required to have served at sea a certain time within a limited number of years.

Relief of Distressed Seamen.—The sum of £112 14s. 9d. has been expended during the year on account of the relief of distressed seamen belonging to New Zealand vessels. Of this amount £1 16s. was paid for the conveyance of the crew of the "Awarua" from Rarotonga, and £1 19s. for C. L. Olsen, one of the crew of the "Ryno." £108 19s. 9d. was paid for the replenishing of the depôts for castaways on the Auckland, Bounty, and Kermadec Islands. A sum of £334 12s. 11d. was paid for the conveyance of the shipwrecked crew of the "Compadre" from the Auckland Islands to the Bluff, and for their clothing and maintenance. The amount of compensation payable to the owners and crew of the sealing schooner "Janet Ramsay," which brought them to the Bluff, was determined after due inquiry by a commission consisting of Messrs. Feldwick and Carswell. It is satisfactory to know that the depôts established at the Auckland Islands by the Government proved of inestimable service to the shipwrecked crew of this vessel.

Wages and Effects of Deceased Seamen.—During the year the estates of thirty-five deceased seamen have been dealt with. Two estates, amounting to £76 0s. 9d., have been transferred to the Public Trustee; £83 13s. 1d. has been paid to relatives, and £32 15s. 4d. paid into the Public Account in accordance with the provisions of section 87 of "The Shipping and Seamen's Act, 1877." Twenty-five new estates were received during the year.

Survey of Steamers.—Certificates of survey under "The Shipping and Seamen's Act, 1877," have been issued to 197 steamers, of 32,288 aggregate tonnage and 9,841 horse-power, as against 201 steamers, of 29,924 aggregate tonnage and 9,887 horse-power last year. Certificates of exemption from the employment of certificated master and engineer have been issued under the provisions of section 201 of "The Shipping and Seamen's Act, 1877," and subsection (2) of section 2 of "The Shipping and Seamen's Act 1877 Amendment Act, 1885," for the s.s. "Ivy" for so long as she is plying on the Manawatu River without passengers, and for the s.s. "Tainui" for so long as she is plying within Queen Charlotte Sound and Tory Channel in the fishing trade.

Wrecks and Casualties.—The accompanying table shows an analysis of the casualties reported. Those on the coast of the colony number 33, representing 17,650 tons, as against 35 casualties, affecting 12,936 tons, in the previous year. The number of total wrecks within the colony was 4 vessels, of 4,453 aggregate tonnage, as against 3 vessels, of 830 aggregate tonnage in the previous year. There is a large decrease in the number of lives lost during the year; being 8, as against 121 in the previous year. Only 1 life was lost on or near the coasts of the colony—namely, from the "Sardhana." Of the 7 lost beyond the colony, 1 each was lost from the s.s. "Hauroto," s.s. "Tongariro," "Alice Muir," "Taranaki," "Waitangi," "Lindores Abbey," and "Auriga."

Of the miscellaneous casualties reported, 2 were of a serious character—viz., those to the "Castor" and "Everest," fire having broken out in the holds of each of these vessels. The "Castor" was loading wool at the time of the casualty. The "Everest," laden with shale, which had put into Lyttelton for repairs in dock, is supposed to have been wilfully set on fire.

Notices to Mariners.—Forty-five notices to mariners were issued during the year, of which eighteen related to matters within the colony. The following is a list of them:—

- Russell Harbour: Harbour establishment abolished.
- Auckland Harbour: Defines man-of-war anchorage.
- French Pass: Position of buoy.
- Timaru Harbour: Alteration in harbour lights.
- Bay of Islands: Position of Whale Rock buoy.
- Waikato River: Leading beacons carried away.
- Queen Charlotte Sound Entrance: Rock reported off White Rocks.
- New River Harbour: Reduction of harbour staff.
- Auckland Harbour: Alteration in lights, outer western tee, Queen Street Wharf.
- Koreho (or Brown's) Island: Position of buoy.
- Lyttelton Harbour: Dredging operations.
- New River Harbour: Channel narrowed as far up as Bombay Rock.¹
- Westport Harbour: Alteration in position of two leading river beacons.
- Greymouth Harbour: Dredge signals.
- Nelson Harbour: Red flag on Haulashore Island during blasting operations.
- Taukupu River: Position of beacons erected.
- Foveaux Strait: Rock reported off Dog Island.
- Napier Harbour: Red light exhibited on end of breakwater to show progress of work.

FISHERIES.—*Oysters.* It is proposed to introduce a Bill this session of Parliament to consolidate and amend the laws relating to oyster fisheries. On the 6th October last an Order in Council was made prohibiting the export of rock, shore, drift, or mangrove oysters, but so much of the Order as related to shore or mangrove oysters was revoked by Order in Council dated the 1st February last. The quantity of oysters exported during the financial year amounted to: From ports in the North Island (Auckland, Russell, and Wellington), 1,077,480 dozen; and from the South Island (Bluff), 374,091 dozen. So large a drain on the oyster-beds of the colony will, I am afraid, before long almost deplete them.