

Under "The Merchant Shipping (Colonial) Act, 1869," Her Majesty is empowered by Order in Council to extend those provisions of the Merchant Shipping Acts which relate to certificates of competency to any British possession, provided that the Board of Trade are able to report that they are satisfied, amongst other things, that the certificates granted in the colony are granted on such principles as to show the like qualification and competency as those granted under the Imperial Acts.

A marked distinction in value is made by this Board between "foreign trade" and "coasting trade" service, and this is shown by the fact that in the regulations it is provided that service in the coasting trade, in order to qualify a candidate for examination, must amount to half as much again as service in the foreign trade.

The geographical conditions of the colonies referred to differ so considerably from those of the United Kingdom that it would be impossible to fix limits for their coasting trades which would exactly correspond with those in force in this country, but it is none the less desirable that they should be fixed on similar principles.

Two very serious anomalies exist under the present regulations:—

1. Except in Queensland, a voyage from two contiguous ports, if one is in one colony and the other in another, is regarded as "foreign service," while a voyage of two thousand miles between two ports in the same colony would be regarded as "coasting service."

2. What is "coasting service" to one colony is "foreign service" in another, so that a man who is only entitled to claim "coasting service," say, in Victoria, may claim all his service as "foreign service" in New South Wales, or *vice versa*. A man, for instance, who has had six years' service on the coast of Victoria, and would have to serve another three years to entitle him to be examined for master in that colony, can go to New South Wales and be examined at once, and produce a certificate which would be equally valid in Victoria or England as in New South Wales.

The Board of Trade would therefore suggest, for the consideration of the Marquis of Ripon, that steps should be taken to promote a complete uniformity of system amongst these colonies, by an acceptance of a common definition of "coasting service," and providing that what is regarded as "coasting service" in one colony should be accepted as such in another, without regard to the colony on the coast of which the service has been performed.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

INGRAM B. WALKER.

#### Sub-enclosures.

SIR,—

Marine Board Office, Brisbane, 24th March, 1893.

I have the honour, by direction, to solicit your opinion in connection with the subject-matter of the enclosed correspondence.

You will observe that the question involved is a very important one, and, in order that you may more readily understand the matter, and the reason for this Board declining to lower the standard of their own, and what they conceive to be the Board of Trade's requirements in the matter of service, I would point out that were this Board to adopt a regulation similar to that of the Victorian Marine Board, it would mean that service in a vessel trading from Brisbane (Queensland) to the Tweed River (New South Wales), a distance of fifty miles along the coast, would be considered "foreign service," while in a vessel trading from Brisbane to Normanton, a distance of upwards of two thousand miles, it would be only "coasting service."

I have, &c.,

SAMUEL A. PETHEBRIDGE, Secretary.

The Assistant Secretary, Marine Department, Board of Trade, London.

#### ENGINEER'S QUALIFYING SERVICE.

SIR,—

Marine Board of Victoria, Melbourne, 4th January, 1893.

This Board has recently had its attention drawn to the matter of the qualifying service to be exacted from candidates for certificates of competency as first- and second-class engineers, and bearing on the point as to what should be considered "coasting service," which under the regulations of the Board of Trade requires eighteen months to equal twelve months' service in the foreign trade.

I attach, for your information, a copy of a communication sent to the Marine Board of New South Wales on the subject, and its reply thereto, and I will be glad if you will kindly state how the regulation of the Board of Trade in respect of coasting service is interpreted in your colony in the examination of candidates and the issue of certificates of competency thereto, under the provisions of the Queen's Order in Council governing the issue of such certificates.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Marine Board, Brisbane.

J. G. McKIE, Secretary.

#### EXAMINATION OF ENGINEERS.

SIR,—

Marine Board of Victoria, Melbourne, 23rd November, 1893 (*sic*).

This Board has recently had brought under its notice the subject of examination of first- and second-class engineers. It has been alleged that candidates are enabled to practically evade the obligation that when engaged in the coasting trade they shall, to be eligible for examination, submit discharges as for eighteen months of such service in lieu of twelve months required in the foreign trade, and such evasion would appear to be possible, as I will endeavour to show.

The home trade under the Victorian Act is defined on page 8 of regulations (attached) as extending from Spencer's Gulf, in South Australia, to Port Stephens, in New South Wales. Under this Board's Regulation No. 13, service performed within such limits will count in Victoria as