

Two classes of certificates of competency are to be issued for engineers of steamships plying within restricted limits; one, which is called a "river engineer's certificate," entitles the holder to serve as engineer of a steamship plying within river or extended river limits; and the other, which is called a "marine engine-driver's certificate," entitles the holder to serve as engineer of a steamship fitted with non-condensing machinery, the area of cylinder or combined area of cylinder of propelling machinery of which does not exceed 200 circular inches, and plying only within harbours, rivers, and lakes, or other inland navigable waters.

Every ship built wholly or partly of iron is to have her compass adjusted by a licensed adjuster.

Authority is given for the Minister of Marine to fix the fees which the master of a vessel may deduct from the wages of his crew as a partial recoupment of the amount he has paid for their engagement and discharge.

Every vessel engaged in the coastal or intercolonial trade which carries at least five certificated able seamen is allowed to substitute two boys for every ordinary seaman she is required to carry.

The power of modifying the load-line rules has been transferred from the Minister of Marine to the Board of Trade. This change was required by the Imperial Government before the Queen's assent was given to "The Shipping and Seamen's Act Amendment Act, 1894."

I have, &c.,

W. T. GLASGOW, Secretary.

The PRINCIPAL EXAMINER of MASTERS and MATES to the SECRETARY, Marine Department.

SIR,—

Wellington, 12th May, 1896.

I have the honour to inform you that the regulations and instructions pertaining to the examination of masters and mates have been rigidly and satisfactorily carried out by the different Examiners at the various ports.

In Auckland the examinations are conducted by Captain Tilly, R.N., and Captain Robertson, Harbourmaster, Onehunga.

Captain Grey, formerly master of the Government steamer "Stella," and latterly Tide Surveyor in the Customs, Port Chalmers, was appointed Examiner for the Port of Otago in May, 1895; and for the convenience of shipping generally, as well as for examination purposes, the examination rooms were changed from Dunedin to Port Chalmers in the following month. The change, in my opinion, is a most desirable one, and has given general satisfaction to those interested.

Since Sir Arthur Douglas, Bart., resigned from the position of Examiner at Lyttelton in June last the position was vacant up to 1st May, 1896, when Captain Marciel, late of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, was appointed Examiner. During the time there was no Examiner at Lyttelton the examinations were conducted either by Captain Grey or myself. This caused much inconvenience, as it necessitated one of us going there.

At Wellington the examinations are conducted by Captain Edwin, R.N., and myself. During the present year, in addition to other examinations, two candidates were examined and passed the voluntary examination in the laws of the deviation of the compasses of iron ships. These two examinations are the first of the kind that have taken place in the colony, and they form the necessary qualification required for a licensed adjuster of compasses.

Captain Bayldon, Harbourmaster at the Thames, conducts examinations for river certificates only, and according to the returns there has been a considerable falling-off in these examinations during the last twelve months. This, in my opinion, is a good sign, as it shows higher grades of certificates are preferred by mariners.

In conclusion, I wish to recommend that the new regulations issued by the Board of Trade, relating to the examinations of masters and mates, which come into force on the first day of January, 1898, should be adopted in New Zealand on the same date.

I have, &c.,

GEO. ALLMAN,

The Secretary, Marine Department.

Principal Examiner of Masters and Mates.

The INSPECTOR of LIGHTHOUSES to the SECRETARY, Marine Department.

SIR,—

Wellington, 13th May, 1896.

I have the honour to report that, in accordance with your instructions, I inspected the Cook Strait and southern lighthouses of New Zealand during the months of January and February last, and I also visited, in company with Mr. Hales, Engineer-in-Chief, the proposed site for a lighthouse at the Snareſ, and I agreed with him to recommend the location already selected by the Commissioners appointed for that purpose.

The result of my inspection is that I am pleased to be able to report that, almost without exception, the lighting apparatus and towers at the several stations are in capital order and well kept; also the keepers' dwellinghouses, with the exception of a few of the old buildings, which have deteriorated through age and exposure to the elements. These buildings referred to are now being put in order, and when completed will be in good condition. At all the stations I found the keepers to be a steady, reliable body of men, attentive to their duties, and apparently fully alive to the responsibility of their position. It is also gratifying to be able to state that they expressed themselves generally as being well satisfied with the treatment accorded by the department, and in no instance was I called upon to listen to any complaint of importance.