

SEA-RESCUE SERVICE

Arising out of the loss of the vessel "Hope" from Port Chalmers and with the purpose of setting up an organization to arrange immediate action for relief in such cases in future, a conference was held in Dunedin at which representatives of the Harbour Boards, Air Department, Seamen's Union, the Fishermen's Society, and the Marine Department were present.

The conference investigated the various methods of assisting overdue vessels and other matters involving life-saving appliances, survey seaworthiness, &c., and a complete scheme of "sea-rescue service" was inaugurated. The intention is to apply the recommendations of the Dunedin conference to other parts of the Dominion so that in the event of a marine disaster the "sea-rescue service" will be able to swing into action at very short notice.

NOTICES TO MARINERS

During the year forty-one notices to mariners were issued, but where the subject-matter was of immediate urgency the facilities of the broadcasting stations were used.

ENGAGEMENT OF SEAMEN

This service has been maintained. A record of seamen applying for work is kept for the purpose of filling vacancies.

SICK AND INJURED SEAMEN

The total amount paid by shipowners to sick and injured seamen, under the provisions of the Shipping and Seamen Act, 1908, and amendments, was £16,215 17s. 2d., as against £11,606 10s. 4d. for the previous year, an increase of £4,609 6s. 10d.

REGISTRATION OF SHIPPING

On the 31st December, 1945, there were on the register of vessels in the Dominion 45 sailing-vessels of 3,553 net tons register, 127 steamers of 61,606 net tons register, and 279 motor-vessels of 18,770 net tons register, as compared with 45 sailing-vessels of 3,553 net tons register, 127 steamers of 61,900 net tons register, and 280 motor-vessels of 18,770 net tons register at the end of the previous year.

The number of seamen employed on board was 2,174, as compared with 2,308 for the year 1944.

PROSECUTIONS

Prosecutions during the year under the various Acts administered by the Department numbered 51, as against 26 during the previous year. The prosecutions during the past year comprised 47 for breaches of the Fisheries Act, 2 the Inspection of Machinery Act, and 2 the Shipping and Seamen Act.

The increase in prosecutions under the Fisheries Act is due to the increased activity by the Department on fisheries patrol.

HARBOURS

At Dargaville the harbour services have been maintained in good order by the Department, and at Picton a satisfactory service to shipping has been provided, this including the maintenance of lights in the Cook Strait area, which is always a hazardous undertaking.

At Westport there are two factors: (1) the maintenance of the port at normal standards to ensure availability of coal to North Island industries, and (2) the improvement of the port for the future. The latter factor has been well provided for by the decision of Government to bring out two eminent harbour engineers from