

to fire-prevention arrangements, watertight subdivision, stability and life-saving appliances, and a high standard of safety is assured. "Ngaio" commenced service in May, 1950.

Of the many significant advances made during the past century towards the safety of life at sea none has been responsible for saving more lives and more ships than wireless telegraphy.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the first installation of wireless telegraphy in a ship, for it was in November, 1899, that the steamer "St. Paul," 66 miles out to sea, received a message transmitted by Marconi by wireless telegraphy from the Isle of Wight. But it was not until 1909 that the prodigious safety value of wireless telegraphy fully gripped the imagination of the world when the British steamer "Republic" was in collision with the Italian steamer "Florida," and while the "Republic" sank beneath his feet the radio officer guided the rescuers to the darkened ship through the thick fog that had enshrouded her. Since the "Republic"—"Florida" disaster, wireless telegraphy, or radio telegraphy as it is now commonly called, has been responsible for saving very many thousands of lives at sea.

Following the conclusion of the third International Conference on Safety of Life at Sea, held in London in 1948, an Inter-Departmental Working Party, comprising officers of the Marine Department and the New Zealand Post Office, has drafted new radio regulations for New Zealand ships. The draft regulations include not only the minimum requirements of the 1948 Safety of Life at Sea Convention, but also radio provisions for all coastwise ships for which it is practicable to provide a measure of radio protection.

Much attention has been given to the extended application of radio telephony in certain classes of coastwise ships, and collateral proposals have been prepared for the consideration of Government for improving the facilities for transmitting and receiving radio-telephone messages in all waters within fifty miles of the New Zealand coast. A survey of the present radio telephone installations in New Zealand ships has indicated that the utility of this modern development in marine telecommunication technique has been widely recognized by New Zealand shipowners. The draft New Zealand Merchant Shipping Radio Regulations have been circulated for comment amongst the various interests concerned, and it is hoped that the final draft of the proposed regulations will be available for submission to the Government within a few months.

That the use of coal for ship propulsion is still declining is evident by the withdrawal from service of two New Zealand coal-burning colliers, and by the conversion from coal to oil fuel of the aged dredge, "Paritutu," owned by the New Plymouth Harbour Board. Factors prejudicing the use of coal at sea are several. There is the marked disinclination to-day of men to engage in the arduous and relatively unpleasant task of coal-firing boilers. Indeed, some coal-burning ships have been so delayed through shortages of firemen that recourse to oil-firing has been almost obligatory for this reason alone. Other factors prejudicial to coal-burning are the larger complement of crews, the shortage of suitable steam coal, and the large coal bunker spaces necessary as compared with the storage space required for fuel oil. The large majority of New Zealand tonnage is, and will be increasingly, dependent upon imported fuel oil. An interesting exception is the dredge "Paritutu," which is to burn residuum from petroleum produced from oil wells in the Moturoa (Taranaki) district. This is believed to be the only steamer in New Zealand which is steamed by fuel oil produced from New Zealand oil-wells.

Arising from the serious mishap which occurred to the steamer "Holmlea" in February, 1949, when loose coal choked the fixed suction pipes of the bilge pumping systems so that the boiler room flooded and the ship became thereby totally disabled,