the Department has required that in every coal-burning steamer there shall be provided in the stokehold, in addition to the fixed bilge suction pipes, a flexible suction hose so connected to the bilge pump that the hose can be used to draw water from either side of the stokehold. The flexible hose will be a valuable alternative means of clearing bilge water from a stokehold should fixed bilge pipes become so choked with coal or ashes that they cannot be promptly cleared at sea.

The need for a measured-mile course for conducting ship speed trials in Wellington Harbour has been long known. During the year the local authorities concerned surveyed a nautical mile course parallel to the Hutt Road and erected suitable land beacons. The measured mile course now established satisfies the requirements that it shall be clear of ship traffic and reasonably free from tidal disturbances and shall have an ample depth of water. Speed trials of m.v. "Kaitangata" conducted on the Wellington measured mile have provided the suitability and usefulness of this new maritime amenity.

The loss by fire at sea is reported of the passenger motor launch "Miss Mount Maunganui," on the 17th January, 1950, while on a voyage from Whangamata to Tauranga. The vessel rolled heavily and caused a lighted primus stove in the cabin to fall to the floor. As a result a full bottle of methylated spirits in the cabin was broken, and shortly after a second bottle of methylated spirits exploded. A fire occurred in the cabin which soon extended throughout the length of the launch and burnt her to the water's edge. It is fortunate that the man and youth on board were successful in making their escape from the burning vessel into the dinghy and thence to the shore without injury.

"Miss Mount Maunganui" had on board two fire-extinguishers, but one which was in the burning cabin was not accessible for use, and the other extinguisher alone was quite inadequate to deal effectively with the fire. The loss of the vessel is attributable in the first instance to the primus stove not being suitably fixed so that it could not be overturned.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY

Steam Boilers, Air and Gas Receivers, and Unfired Steam-pressure Vessels

The following statement sets out the number of inspections made during the year ended 31st March, 1950, of steam boilers and unfired pressure vessels subject to steam, air, and refrigerant gas pressure (Group "A") and the corresponding figures for 1948–49. The figures include hydraulic tests applied at first inspections:—

	1949–50.	1948–49.
Steam boilers	4,730	4,551
Unfired pressure vessels	12,600	11,541
Hydraulic tests	1,557	709
Total inspections in Group "A" ..	18,887	16,801

The inspections included 75 new power boilers manufactured in the Dominion, and 26 new boilers imported from abroad. Most of the new boilers imported from abroad were of the large high-pressure water-tube type which, as yet, cannot be manufactured in New Zealand.

The inspections also include 81 new air-receivers made in New Zealand and 50 made abroad, and 280 new unfired pressure vessels, other than air-receivers, made in New Zealand and 172 made abroad.