

Beaumont. The work in the Wellington office has increased to such an extent as to render it impossible for the Superintendent to perform it efficiently without assistance. At present temporary help is employed, but I recommend that a permanent assistant be appointed.

Prosecutions have been instituted and fines imposed for breaches of the law regarding seamen in the following cases, viz.: The master of the s.s. "Indraghiri," for carrying a fireman without putting him on the articles; the master of the s.s. "Paeroa," for carrying a seaman without putting him on the articles; the master of the s.s. "Paiaka," for proceeding to sea without an A.B. on board; the master of the s.s. "Stella," for going to sea without a full crew; the master of the s.s. "Rose Casey," for taking a seaman to sea without putting him on the articles; the master of the s.s. "Stormbird," for carrying a seaman without putting him on articles; C. Manson, for enticing and helping two seamen to desert from the s.s. "Tomoana"; and the owners and master of the s.s. "Kamona," for carrying less than the prescribed number of seamen. The master of the s.s. "Mápourika" was convicted, but no fine was imposed, for proceeding to sea with two firemen short of the prescribed number. The master of the s.s. "Westralia" was fined for proceeding to sea without greasers on board, but, on appeal to the Supreme Court, the conviction was quashed on the ground that, although the schedule to the Act which fixed the minimum number of the crew which must be carried mentioned greasers, the section of the Act which referred to the schedule did not specify greasers. The defect does not, however, exist now, as both the section and the schedule of the Act of 1903 provide specifically for greasers.

*Masters, Mates, and Engineers.*—The report of the Principal Examiner of Masters and Mates is appended hereto. For certificates of competency 227 persons passed their examinations and ninety-seven failed. Of those who passed, 142 were masters, mates, and engineers of sea-going ships, sixty-seven were masters and engineers of steamships plying within restricted limits, twelve were engineers of sea-going ships propelled by oil-engines, and six were engineers of similar vessels plying within restricted limits.

Under the provisions of "The Shipping and Seamen Act, 1903," every applicant for examination for a certificate is required to be a British subject. The Act also provides that the Minister or the owner of a ship may at any time require the master or mate to submit himself to an examination in the sight-test, the examination to be made by an Examiner appointed under the Act.

Provision is also made that the holder of a second mate's foreign-going certificate shall be entitled to ship as mate of a home-trade ship.

The Board of Trade has made certain alterations in its regulations for the examination of masters and mates, and as New Zealand certificates are recognised in Great Britain and elsewhere subject to the condition that our regulations shall be similar to those of the Board of Trade, that body has asked this Department to make the necessary alterations in the regulations in force in the colony, and this is being done.

The Department has been notified by the Marine Board of Victoria that it has decided to recognise New Zealand river engineers' certificates as being equal to the highest grade of engine-driver's certificate issued in Victoria—that is, as equal to a third-class engine-driver of a river and bay steamship under 100 nominal horse-power.

Tables showing the names of persons who have received certificates and the classes and grades of certificates issued are appended.

Prosecutions have been instituted and fines imposed for breaches of the law regarding certificated officers in the following cases, viz.: The owner of the s.s. "Tongariro," for plying on Lake Taupo without a certificated engineer—the engineer was also fined; the master of the oil-engine vessel "Pelorus," for having command of the vessel without holding a master's certificate; and the owner of the scow "Rata," for allowing her to go to sea with an uncertificated master, the master being also fined for acting without a certificate. The owner of the s.s. "Kilmorey" was also proceeded against for running the vessel without a certificated engineer, but the case was dismissed without prejudice.

*Survey of Ships.*—During the year certificates have been issued for 281 steamers, thirty-eight oil-engine vessels, and ten sailing-vessels. A return of such vessels is appended hereto. In addition to the survey of these vessels, several surveys have been made for seaworthiness. The survey of sailing-ships has hitherto been optional, but the new Shipping and Seamen Act makes it compulsory in the case of those employed in the intercolonial trade.

The life-saving appliances rules have been amended to allow vessels not over 200 tons register, which are engaged in landing on and shipping from beaches by means of surf-boats, to carry such boats and their launches on board with outer chocks to keep them in position. It is not likely that the chocks would cause any delay in launching the boats in case of emergency, as the frequent use of the boats makes the men very expert in handling them.

*Coastal Dangers.*—The work of surveying the coast has been continued by H.M.S. "Penguin," which has now been employed on it for four years. The work has been carried out under an arrangement with the Imperial Government, under which the colony pays half the cost. The arrangement with the Admiralty has been terminated as from the end of this year's work, in view of this Department establishing a marine survey, for which it is proposed to ask Parliament to make the necessary provision during the coming session. There is still a good deal of coastal work to be done, and the most important of this should be carried out before any harbour-work is undertaken.

The "New Zealand Nautical Almanac for 1905," edited by Captain Blackburne, Nautical Adviser to the Department, was issued in December last, and the demand for the publication shows that it has met a want. Captain Blackburne's A, B, C, and D Tables are now being printed as a separate publication for sale to masters of vessels. They will be of great value to navigators, and the cost of publishing them will be recouped to the Department by the proceeds of the sale.