

Survey of Ships.

During the year certificates were issued to 332 steamers, 428 oil-engine vessels, and 112 sailing-vessels, as compared with 337 steamers, 537 oil-engine vessels, and 119 sailing-vessels at the end of the previous year.

The following limits have been defined to be river and extended river limits:—

Hicks Bay: River limits, inside bay; extended limits, between Hicks Bay and Te Araroa.

Akaroa: Extended river limits, between Akaroa Head on the north, including light-house landing, and a point not more than a mile to the south of Iron Head.

Otago Harbour: Extended river limits for pilot vessels, not beyond eight miles outside Tairaroa Head.

The "Galvo" fire-extinguishing appliance has been approved for use on motor-boats.

Proceedings were taken by the Department for the following breaches of the law in connection with survey certificates, viz.: Captain J. Carlton, for carrying too many passengers—fined 10s. and costs; G. Reading, for running a launch without a survey certificate—fined £1 and costs; F. Rattenbury, for running launches without survey certificates—case dismissed on ground that law did not require survey. (The Department appealed against this decision, and the Supreme Court allowed the appeal. The Magistrate then convicted without imposing a fine or ordering payment of costs.) Captain J. Davies, master of s.s. "Pupuke," for carrying too many passengers—fined £2 and costs; G. Lang, for running scow "Oban" without survey certificate—convicted and ordered to pay costs; Northern Steamship Company, for carrying too many passengers on certain of its steamers—fined £2 and costs on each of sixteen charges, and 5s. for each of the 247 passengers carried in excess of the proper number; Captain Somerville, of the "Caed Mile Failte," for not carrying proper lights—fined £2 and costs; and J. Spencer, master of cutter "Stag," for lying at anchor without anchor lights—fined £3 and costs.

Deck-cargo Regulations.

The deck-cargo regulations are working well, and there have been very few attempts at overloading. Inspections are made by the Surveyors before the vessels leave port, and if there is found to be more cargo on deck than allowed by a vessel's license the excess quantity has to be put below hatches or ashore.

The regulations have been amended to provide that in the case of ships the whole of whose deck cargo does not consist of timber the alleyways are always to be kept clear of cargo and live-stock, and that there is to be a clear space of not less than 3 ft. wide either on one side or the other, or part on one side and part on the other; also, that on ships the whole of whose deck cargo is timber it may be stowed from rail to rail, secured to the satisfaction of the Superintendent of Mercantile Marine.

The fee for the inspection of a ship for a deck-cargo license has been reduced from £1 to 10s.

Wireless Telegraphy on Ships.

In pursuance of the provisions of section 50 of the Shipping and Seamen Amendment Act, 1909, regulations have been made requiring New-Zealand-registered ships which are authorized by their ordinary certificates to carry 150 passengers or more at sea to be fitted with wireless-telegraph apparatus. These regulations will come into force on the 1st July next.

Deceased Seamen's Estates.

The estates of twenty deceased seamen have been dealt with during the year. The amount received on account of them was £168 17s. 2d., and the amount paid to relatives and other claimants was £129 4s. 9d. The sum of £47 17s., which had remained unclaimed for over six years, was paid into the Public Account. Particulars of the estates are given in a return which is appended.

Wrecks and Casualties.

During the year seventy-six inquiries into casualties to ships were held, seventy of them being preliminary and six Magisterial inquiries. Appended are tables showing the casualties and the analysis thereof. Those on or near the coasts of New Zealand numbered eighty-seven, representing 62,733 tons register, as compared with 103, of 45,001 tons, during the previous year. The number of lives lost was five, as compared with thirty-three in the previous year. One life was lost in the explosion which destroyed the s.s. "Moa," and four in the loss of the auxiliary fishing-cutter "Iris" at Bluff.

Nautical Publications.

The Nautical Almanac for 1914 was issued at the beginning of December last, and from the demand for copies it is clear that its popularity is not abating. The Department has also issued a small book, "Modern Up-to-date Navigation," prepared by Captain Blackburne, Nautical Adviser to the Department. The book is on sale at 1s. 6d. a copy.

A fair number of the ABC Azimuth Tables issued by the Department continue to be sold. The practice of importing Admiralty charts and selling them at Mercantile Marine Offices at a little over cost price has been continued, much to the convenience of shipmasters.