

The Devonport Ferry Company, in Auckland, have practically renewed their fleet in recent years, and this firm must not only be congratulated on their enterprise in this direction, but also in having these vessels constructed in Auckland. This confidence in the local shipbuilders has not been misplaced, for the success and suitability of the new vessels are apparent. I had the pleasure recently of being present at a trial run of one of them, built specially for service between Auckland and St. Heliers and other bays.

Sixty-four of the vessels surveyed were fitted with new propeller shafts, 25 had new propellers fitted, 9 had new blades fitted to their propellers, 1 had a new boss to the propeller, 35 had new engines fitted, 4 had new main boilers fitted. Three out of the four boilers were built in the Dominion. A donkey boiler on one of the vessels surveyed was condemned as unfit for further service.

The number of surveys made during the year total 712.

During the summer months a great many special excursions have been run, and, so far as I am aware, have not been attended with any mishap. The general equipment for all of these vessels so engaged has been supervised in every case by a competent surveyor.

Surveys of Ships for Seaworthiness.

A large number of seaworthiness surveys were made during the year, and each year this class of work demands more of the attention of the Department's surveyors. Ships of modern construction are driven faster than formerly, the machinery is much more complicated, the steam-pressures are quite 100 per cent. higher than they were twenty years ago, and the wear-and-tear and the risks are thereby increased. The number of vessels employed on and around the coasts and in the foreign and intercolonial trades have also largely increased. The causes which led up to these surveys include the following: Defects in pumps, propeller aperture, combustion chamber, main steam-pipes, and crank-shaft, fires, grounding, broken propeller-shaft, collisions, leaks, shortage of water in boilers, broken rudder, &c.

The total number of seaworthiness surveys made was forty-three.

Government Steamers.

The Government steamers surveyed during the year numbered eighteen, as follows: s.s. "Amokura," s.s. "Antrim," s.s. "Ben Lomond," s.s. "Earnshaw," s.s. "Hauraki," s.s. "Hinemoa," o.e.v. "Huia," o.e.v. "Irina," s.s. "Janie Seddon," s.s. "Lady Roberts," o.e.v. "Manurewa," o.e.v. "Mororo," s.s. "Mountaineer," o.e.v. "Patiti," o.e.v. "Reremoana," s.s. "Tawera," s.s. "Tutanekai," and o.e.v. Defence launch "W."

No special repairs were made to any of the Government steamers during the year outside the ordinary repairs that were found necessary at their annual surveys.

Additional Steamers and Auxiliary-powered Vessels surveyed for the First Time.

During the year ninety-six steamships and vessels fitted with oil-engines as a motive power have been surveyed for the first time.

Sailing-ships.

The surveys of sailing-ships have been practically completed, and at the end of the year very few were due for survey. As contemplated last year, there were not so many general repairs this year owing to the completeness of what was practically the first survey of these vessels last year. The whole time of one of our surveyors at the Port of Auckland is taken up with sailing-ships. Auckland is by far the biggest centre for sailing-ship traffic. The nature of the country and the timber and other industries established on the banks of shallow rivers and estuaries afford profitable employment for scows and small sailing craft. The total number of surveys of sailing-vessels made during the year amount to 104.

Districts and Inspections.

Mr. James McAlpine, who was attached to the Auckland office as an Inspector of Machinery and Surveyor of Ships, died on 28th September, 1913. He joined the Department on the 25th March, 1912, and though only a young officer, he showed by his work all through marked ability and fitness for the position. He had gained the confidence of the public who had had dealings with him and the esteem of all his colleagues.

The additions to the technical staff during the year were as follows: Patrick Joseph Healy, appointed to the Wellington District on 17th October, 1913; William John White, appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of the late Mr. McAlpine at Auckland, took up his duties on 24th October, 1913; Joseph Edward Faulder Buckland, appointed to the Southland District on the 26th November, 1913.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT DUNCAN,

Chief Inspector of Machinery, Chief Surveyor of Ships, and Chief Examiner
of Marine Engineers, Land Engineers, and Engine-drivers.

The Secretary of Marine and Inspection of Machinery Department.