

due to certificated men having joined the Expeditionary Forces, and in order to avoid delaying the vessels the Department has, in exercise of the powers given to it by section 57 of the Shipping and Seamen Amendment Act, 1909, allowed them to sail with second mates holding certificates of competency as home-trade masters.

Appended is a return showing the number of seamen engaged and discharged at the various ports in the Dominion, with the fees received for the engagements and discharges. The number engaged was 20,943, and the number discharged 20,458. The fees received amounted to £2,712 2s. During the previous year the engagements were 22,330, and the discharges 21,718, and the amount of fees received £3,015 18s. The transactions at the four principal ports were:—

	Engagements.	Discharges.	Fees.		
			£	s.	d.
Auckland	5,655	5,718	765	12	6
Wellington	7,632	7,235	907	8	0
Lyttelton	1,896	1,884	281	7	0
Dunedin and Port Chalmers ..	3,081	3,136	427	1	6
During the previous year they were—					
Auckland	6,834	6,916	973	6	0
Wellington	7,751	7,159	992	19	6
Lyttelton	1,757	1,766	250	19	6
Dunedin and Port Chalmers ..	2,730	3,052	408	4	6

Proceedings for breaches of the law in regard to seamen were taken by the Department, with the following results: A. J. Croft, master of s.s. "Victoria," for carrying a seaman without entering into an agreement with him—fined £2 and costs; R. E. Price, master of the schooner "Morning Light," for employing a seaman who had deserted from another vessel—fined £1 and costs; O. Berg, master of s.s. "Wetere," for carrying a seaman without entering into an agreement with him—convicted and ordered to pay costs, also convicted and ordered to pay costs for employing a seaman in a capacity other than that for which he was engaged.

Masters, Mates, and Engineers.

The examination of candidates has been carried out at the various examination ports in a very satisfactory manner. 329 candidates passed and 109 failed. Of those who passed, 188 were masters, mates, and engineers of sea-going ships, 26 were masters and engineers of steamships plying in restricted limits, 2 were masters of fishing-boats and of cargo-vessels up to 25 tons register, 23 were engineers of sea-going ships propelled by mechanical power other than steam, and 90 were engineers of similar vessels plying within restricted limits.

The regulations for the examination of masters and mates have been amended to provide that time served on a training-ship shall count as equivalent to half the same time spent in service at sea up to a limit of two years; and new regulations have been made as to examination in sight tests. The regulations for the examination of engineers have been consolidated and amended so as to bring them in line with those issued by the Imperial Board of Trade. The principal amendments are that candidates for second-class engineers' certificates must serve eighteen months at sea in a foreign-going steamer or twenty-seven months in a home-trade steamer, instead of twelve months and eighteen months respectively. Similar extensions in length of service have been made in the case of candidates for first-class certificates, and some additional problems have been added to the syllabus of subjects for examination. Provision is made that a portion of the time spent at recognized technical schools will count as equivalent to sea service, and a number of alterations have been made in the rules for the conduct of examinations.

Provision was made in the Shipping and Seamen Amendment Act, 1909, that the Minister could declare certificates granted in other British dominions to be of equal force with certificates granted in New Zealand, provided that the certificates are accepted as of equal force of specified grades of certificates granted in the dominion to which the declaration referred. Application was made to this Department that New South Wales third-class certificates might be recognized as being equal to New Zealand river engineers' certificates, and the New South Wales Department of Navigation was asked whether, if such recognition was given, New Zealand river engineers' certificates would be recognized in that State as being equal to its third-class certificates. The reply received was that as the Federal Navigation Act would be introduced in the near future, and as under that Act a third-class certificate would have quite a different value, the question should lie postponed until the Act came into operation. Nothing further could therefore be done in the matter.

Messrs. D. Rankin and S. N. Johnston have been appointed Examiners of Engineers.

Registration of Shipping.

Returns are appended showing the vessels registered in New Zealand on the 31st December last. On that date there were 197 sailing-vessels, of 20,984 registered tonnage, and 384 steamers of 77,901 tons register. The number of seamen and boys on board was 4,335, as compared with 5,477 at the end of the previous year. The register of 19 steamships, of 50,376 tons register, has been transferred to Great Britain to enable advantage to be taken of the Imperial Government's war insurance scheme.

Survey of Ships.

Certificates have been issued to 294 steamers, 474 oil-engine vessels, and 88 sailing-vessels, as compared with 332 steamers, 428 oil-engine vessels, and 112 sailing-vessels in the previous year. Details as to alterations and repairs to vessels surveyed will be found in the report of the Chief Surveyor of Ships, which is appended hereto.