

SECRETARY OF MARINE to Hon. the MINISTER OF MARINE.

Marine and Inspection of Machinery Department,
Wellington, 15th June, 1919.

SIR,—

I have the honour to make the following report on the work of this Department during the year ended the 31st March last.

Head Office.

As the officers who have been away on active service during the war are now returning and resuming their duties, the difficulty which has been experienced during their absence is disappearing and matters are becoming normal.

Mercantile Marine Offices.

The work of these offices has been carried out in a very satisfactory manner, and the Superintendents and their staff are deserving of commendation for the way in which they have carried out both their ordinary duties and special duties which have been placed upon them in consequence of the war.

After the signing of the Armistice the military non-commissioned officers who were placed in the mercantile marine offices to examine the military papers of seamen were withdrawn.

Owing to the increase in the work of procuring seamen at Wellington it is necessary that an Assistant Inspector of Seamen should be appointed at that port, and steps are now being taken to make the necessary appointment. During the year Captain A. Barr, Inspector at Wellington, left the service to better himself, and Captain W. F. Clark was appointed to fill the vacancy.

The Department has had to withhold the discharges of a good many seamen who have deserted from or failed to join their ships.

Appended is a statement showing the number of seamen engaged and discharged at the various ports during the year, and the fees received for engagements and discharges. The number engaged was 20,459, and the number discharged 19,663. The fees received amounted to £2,463 1s. 6d. During the previous year the engagements were 18,577 and the discharges 17,872, the amount of fees being £2,122 1s. 6d.

The transactions at the principal ports were—

	Engagements.	Discharges.	Fees.		
			£	s.	d.
Auckland	6,573	6,417	870	10	0
Wellington	7,385	6,907	960	19	0
Lyttelton	2,190	2,199	253	6	0
Dunedin and Port Chalmers	2,645	2,578	175	13	0
During the previous year they were—					
Auckland	5,729	5,560	739	14	0
Wellington	6,991	6,349	844	5	0
Lyttelton	1,411	1,352	196	8	0
Dunedin and Port Chalmers	2,781	3,062	140	4	0

As in previous years, no fees were charged in respect of engagements and discharges on transports and hospital ships.

Proceedings were taken against H. J. Metcalf for altering his discharge. He was convicted and fined £2 and costs.

Appended is a statement showing the amounts paid under the provisions of section 6 of the Shipping and Seamen Amendment Act, 1911, to sick and injured seamen. The total is £16,617 8s. 9d., as compared with £7,832 16s. 4d. last year. The increase is mainly due to the influenza epidemic.

Masters, Mates, and Engineers.

During the year 307 candidates passed their examinations and 84 failed. Of those who passed 139 were masters, mates, and engineers of sea-going ships, 3 were masters of fishing-boats or cargo-boats under 25 tons, 2 were passes in the compass syllabus, 24 were masters and engineers of steamers plying within restricted limits, 2 were marine-engine drivers, 38 were engineers of sea-going motor-propelled boats, and 99 were engineers of such boats plying within restricted limits.

The difficulty of getting properly certificated second mates for sailing and auxiliary-powered ships still continues, and there does not appear to be much prospect of an improvement in the near future. There has also been some difficulty in getting certificated men for small launches, but I think this will disappear as the men from the front resume their civil occupations.

The new regulations for the examination of masters and mates are now in operation. The examinations are carried out in Auckland by Captain Dykes, the Examiner who is stationed there; at Wellington by Captain Blackburne, the Chief Examiner, and Captain Whiteford; and at Lyttelton and Dunedin by Captain Whiteford, who visits those places for the purpose.

The following is the report of Captain H. S. Blackburne, Chief Examiner of Masters and Mates:—

“The work, as usual, has been carried out by the Examiners at the four principal ports in a satisfactory manner.

“All examination-rooms (including those at Napier and Gisborne, where very occasionally the master of a river steamer is examined by the Harbourmasters of those ports) have recently been inspected.

“New regulations for examination of masters and mates were brought into force on the 1st October, 1918. Several new subjects were brought into the examination for foreign-going candidates of all grades, beginning with some knowledge of elementary plane trigonometry for second mates; also, in the higher grades, meteorology, ship-building, elementary science, stability, and essay-writing on some technical subject.