

GOVERNMENT SHIPPING OFFICES.

In the Government shipping offices the administration of the Shipping and Seamen Act has been efficiently carried out. Appended is a statement showing the number of seamen engaged and discharged at the various ports during the year, and the fees received for such transactions. The total number engaged and discharged was 17,989 and 17,817 respectively, as against 18,009 and 17,817 respectively during the previous financial year. The transactions at the four main ports were as follows (the figures in parentheses being those of the previous year):—

Port.	Engagements,	Discharges.	Fees.					
			£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Auckland	6,214 (5,155)	6,228 (5,168)	1,135	2	0	(897	7	0)
Wellington	6,099 (5,937)	6,265 (6,147)	1,114	3	0	(1,068	5	0)
Lyttelton	1,854 (2,341)	1,663 (2,256)	326	9	0	(422	13	0)
Dunedin	1,549 (1,798)	1,549 (1,622)	287	6	0	(329	11	0)

The total amount paid by shipowners to sick and injured seamen, under the provisions of section 6 of the Shipping and Seamen Amendment Act, 1911, was £16,854 8s. 10d., as against £13,443 18s. 10d. in the previous year.

INSPECTION OF SEAMEN.

This service has been maintained. A record of men applying for work is kept for the purpose of filling vacancies as they occur.

REGISTRATION OF SHIPPING.

On the 31st December last there were on the register of vessels in the Dominion 127 sailing-vessels, of 19,812 tons register, and 428 steamers, of 80,850 tons register, as compared with 138 sailing-vessels, of 21,484 tons register, and 418 steamers, of 70,860 tons register, at the end of the previous year. The number of seamen and boys employed on board was 3,623, as compared with 3,393 at the end of 1922.

SURVEYS OF SHIPS.

Certificates have been granted to 267 steamers, 540 oil-engine vessels, and 30 sailing-vessels, as compared with 282, 512, and 34 respectively in the previous year. Attached are returns of seagoing vessels, included in the above, to which certificates were issued.

The regulations governing the inspection and safety of ships and waterside cargo-gear have been well carried out by the Inspectors specially appointed at the four main ports, and by the ordinary Surveyors of Ships at the other ports. A very large number of inspection visits have been made by the officers, and defects found and remedied.

Forty-six vessels, of which seven are seagoing vessels, were surveyed for the first time during the year. One of these vessels is the "Muritai," a twin-screw oil-burning steamer plying in Wellington Harbour. The vessel's dimensions are—Length, 165·3 ft.; breadth, 30·1 ft.; depth, 11·35 ft. The hull is built of steel. The indicated horse-power of the propelling machinery is 900. The vessel was granted a certificate to carry 1,550 passengers. Another of these vessels is the "Mollyhawk," a composite built steamer engaged in the vehicular and passenger traffic on Auckland Harbour. The hull of the "Mollyhawk" was built in Auckland. The engines and boiler were imported. The dimensions of the hull are—Length, 128 ft.; breadth, 32 ft.; depth, 10·64 ft. The propelling-engines have cylinders 14 in. and 28 in. diameters by 18 in. stroke, and are supplied with steam from a marine-type multitubular boiler working at a pressure of 130 lb. per square inch.

For seaworthiness under section 226 of the Act, 123 vessels were surveyed. Some of the vessels were considerably damaged, notably the "Port Auckland."

Plans and specifications for two new ferry-steamers for Auckland have been submitted and approved by the Department. These vessels are now being built in Auckland shipyards. Plans and specifications of a scow, 72 ft. long, and of a ketch, about 70 ft. long, have also been submitted and approved, and these vessels will also be built in Auckland. As usual, a percentage of the proposals submitted for approval have been abandoned.

New instructions respecting oil-fuel installation in passenger steamships have been issued by the Imperial Board of Trade. The new circular is a reissue of a previous one, with the addition of a paragraph containing certain further recommendations which are a result of the experience of the last few years.

New rules for the sizes of shafting of internal-combustion engines, other than Diesel, for marine purposes have been prepared, and will be issued very shortly. These rules are practically the same as those of Lloyd's Register, and, as they are approved by the Board of Trade, the Department should have no difficulty in securing compliance with them. They will not come into force until the 1st January, 1925, in order to give sufficient time for makers of oil-engines abroad to be notified.

A new type of safety coal-hook, known as the Oliver safety releasing-hook, was this year approved in accordance with the requirements of the General Harbour Regulations of the 22nd May, 1919. The size submitted was suitable for a working-load of 5 cwt.

Particular attention has been given to spaces utilized for the carriage of petroleum, and to the testing of bulkheads in vessels utilized for this class of cargo. The bulkheads are tested for gas-tightness before certificates are granted.