

intervals. This would leave insufficient time in which to make any material progress with survey work. Under present conditions it takes the "Tutanekai" all her time to maintain a reasonably satisfactory service to the lighthouses. By a process of conversion of more lights to automatic, and working them from the shore instead of from the sea, the time of the ship can be saved, but there will always be lights which must remain as watched lights. In the meantime the idea of a dual-purpose ship must be regarded as impracticable.

Although an up-to-date coastal survey is a very desirable thing, it is not a vital necessity, and any disabilities that may arise may readily be overcome by careful navigation and the avoidance of corner-cutting. Having regard to the cost of acquiring and maintaining a survey-vessel, and also to the existing financial position, it has been decided to defer the matter for further consideration when circumstances are more favourable.

EXAMINATION OF MASTERS AND MATES.

The total number of examinations for certificates of competency as master and as mate, and for voluntary examination in compass-deviation, during the year was ninety-six. The proportion of passes to the total number of examinations held during the past five years was 38½ per cent. in 1927, 34 per cent. in 1926, 46 per cent. in 1925, 51 per cent. in 1924, and 43 per cent. in 1923. By this it will be seen the percentage of passes, although slightly higher than last year, has not greatly improved. Reviewing this, it would appear reasonable to assume the changes made in the examinations during the year have resulted in requiring some candidates to attend examinations more than once before being successful in obtaining the desired certificate. Eighteen candidates passed at first attempt, and of the total number of examinations eight were for certificates for restricted-limits ships only.

Of the total examinations, 59 per cent. were held at Wellington, 23 per cent. at Auckland, and 18 per cent. at Lyttelton. The figures for last year were 52 per cent., 28½ per cent., and 19½ per cent. respectively.

There were two examinations held for the higher certificate as extra master, and in each case the candidate was unsuccessful. This examination lasts a full week, and it is not surprising that few candidates compete for this certificate.

Four examinations were held for the voluntary examination in compass-deviation, and three candidates were successful in passing. This qualification entitles the holder to apply for this Department's license as an adjuster of ship's compasses.

There were no candidates for examination for a certificate as colonial pilot.

Three candidates for certificates of competency elected to pass the higher-speed signalling examination, and each was successful in doing this.

A condition to becoming eligible to sit for a certificate for sea-going ships requires that a candidate shall have passed examination in "first aid to the injured," but in the case of a certificate for home-trade ships any candidate who desires to sit for his first certificate is required also to have passed the wireless signallers examination. This latter requirement was introduced on the 1st January, 1926. During the year four candidates obtained their first home-trade certificate, and one failed to pass on two occasions.

The examinations for certificates for foreign-going ships are identical with those conducted by the Board of Trade in Great Britain, and are altered from time to time as may be necessary so as to ensure uniformity with those of the Board. The Board revised its regulations in 1926, and this Department's regulations are now under revision so as to be in conformity with them.

EXAMINATION IN FORM AND COLOUR VISION.

These examinations have been carried out at Wellington by the Department's Examiners of Masters and Mates, and at Auckland, Dunedin, and Lyttelton by local officers of this Department. A total of sixty-eight examinations were held. Of this total, 38 per cent. of the examinations were held at Wellington, 28 per cent. at Lyttelton, 25 per cent. at Auckland, and 9 per cent. at Dunedin. Of the total number, one candidate failed to pass the letter test, and seven the lantern test, one of whom was found to have defective colour vision.

EXAMINATION OF LIGHTKEEPERS IN SIGNALLING.

During the year the examination of lightkeepers in signalling has been carried out by this Department's Examiners. The results of these examinations show that a good standard of signalling is maintained in the lighthouse service. A total of fourteen examinations were held; three lightkeepers were credited with having passed a fair examination, five a good examination, and five a very good examination. Since its inauguration in 1922 thirty-three lightkeepers have passed this examination.

NAUTICAL ALMANAC AND TIDE-TABLES.

The compilation, printing, and production of the 25th edition of this very necessary annual publication was carried out as usual, and the book was issued early in December, 1926. Information