

ADJUSTMENT AND INSPECTION OF SHIPS' COMPASSES.

The regulations for the adjustment of compasses have been carefully administered, and compasses continue to be maintained in a good state of efficiency. The results of the investigation of adjustments show that the work of Compass Inspectors and Adjusters has been carefully performed. In a few cases it has been necessary to exercise extra supervision on account of the changing magnetic force in the vessels.

ADMIRALTY CHARTS.

The Department, acting as sub-agent for J. D. Potter and Co., London, maintains a stock of Admiralty charts at Head Office and at the Mercantile Marine Offices in Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin. The stock includes all charts of the Dominion, and also charts of a considerable portion of the globe. The latter practically includes all ports where non-regular traders are likely to go after discharging in the Dominion.

The charts, after their receipt, are periodically corrected to date and, to ensure that purchasers receive information issued subsequent to the date of correction, a list of Notices to Mariners affecting the charts is maintained at each office for inspection. This procedure has been in operation in the Dominion for some years, and is now a condition in agreements between sub-agents and Messrs. J. D. Potter and Co.

The sales of charts are increasing progressively, and this year reached a total of 976, of which about 32 per cent. were of charts outside the Dominion.

EXAMINATION OF MASTERS AND MATES.

During the year examinations were held in Auckland and Wellington and were conducted in a satisfactory manner, those for foreign-going certificates being in accordance with the Imperial Board of Trade requirements.

Seventy-two examinations were held during the year. The percentages for foreign-going and home-trade certificates are as follows: Foreign-going—full pass, 47·8; partial pass, 39·1; failure, 13·1. Home-trade—full pass, 71·4; partial pass, 14·3; failure, 14·3. One candidate passed for fore and aft sail endorsement.

EXAMINATION IN FORM AND COLOUR VISION.

These examinations are held at Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin. During the year fifty-seven candidates were examined, only one of whom failed in the lantern test and also in the letter test. No special examination was held during the year.

SHIPPING CASUALTIES.

The shipping casualties during the year on or near the coast of New Zealand are recorded in the table attached to this report. Most of these are of a minor nature, but it is necessary to record them in order to maintain, for the use of surveyors, a complete history of every vessel. Casualties involving loss of life are, fortunately, rare on the New Zealand coast, but this year the sailing scow "Rangi" capsized during a cyclonic storm near Auckland with the loss of four lives. Of the other casualties, none of which involved loss of life, the most serious were—the striking by the new motor-ship "Matua" of an uncharted coral rock in Arutunga Anchorage, Aitutaki, Cook Islands; the striking of Pipitea Wharf at Wellington by the s.s. "Wahine" during a fog; the wreck of the s.s. "Abel Tasman," which was swept away from the wharf at Greymouth during a flood and thrown on to the beach near the north Breakwater; and the foundering of two scows "Kaiaia" and "Tamahaë."

"NEW ZEALAND NAUTICAL ALMANAC AND TIDE-TABLES."

This publication for 1937 (35th edition) was issued about three weeks later than usual, the delay being due to pressure of work at the Government Printing Office. It provides seamen and other persons with much necessary and useful information in addition to special information for the various ports in the Dominion. The port information is corrected by the various Boards, and at the time of going to press is the latest available. New plans of Timaru and Oamaru were included in this year's edition.

NOTICES TO MARINERS.

Information relative to changes in navigational aids and to the discovery of obstructions, wreckage, or other dangers to navigation, and general information necessary for the use of mariners was published in the form of Notices to Mariners, of which fifty-five were issued during the year.

In conformity with a scheme developed by the International Hydrographic Bureau, Monaco, the Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin Mercantile Marine Offices have been established as "Centralization Offices for Notices to Mariners." Notices are now received from the Admiralty, United States of America, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Singapore, India, Japan, Dutch East Indies, France, Canada, and Phillipine Islands and are available for inspection at these offices. At all other ports visited by foreign-going ships notices from the Admiralty, Australia, and Suva are available for inspection.

"CERTIFICATES OF EFFICIENCY AS LIFEBOATMEN."

Examinations for these certificates are held in Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin, and the certificates issued by the Superintendents of Mercantile Marine.

The shipping companies are requested to provide the necessary lifeboat and gear, and are responsible for getting the men together at the time appointed for the examination.

Since the examination was introduced, 1,032 certificates have been issued.