

*Examination of Masters, Mates, and Engineers.*—One hundred and thirty-two candidates passed their examination for certificates of competency, and forty failed. Of those who passed eighty-six were masters, mates, and engineers of sea-going vessels, and forty-six were masters and engineers of river steamers. There were no failures to pass the colour-test examination reported during the year. Four certificates of service were issued during the year, two being for the Home and two for the Foreign trade.

*Relief of Distressed Seamen.*—The sum of £41 18s. has been expended during the year on account of the relief of distressed seamen belonging to New Zealand vessels. Of this amount £22 8s. has been refunded to the Board of Trade for conveyance of four men of the "Julia Pryce" from Aitutaki to Raratonga, and the maintenance of two of them at Raratonga for thirty-four days, and £19 10s. for the conveyance of ten of the crew of the "Notero" from Apia, Samoa, to Auckland. No amounts have been expended this year in the relief of crews of other than New Zealand vessels, or in replenishing the dépôts for castaways on the outlying islands of New Zealand. In connection with this subject, however, representations were made to the Government in December last that there were persons in a destitute condition on Macquarie Island; the Government then decided to send a vessel to ascertain whether such was the case or not, and accordingly chartered the s.s. "Kakanui" for this purpose. She left Invercargill on the 24th December and reached the Macquaries on the 3rd January, and left a few hours afterwards with eight men who had been working on the island, and has never been heard of since. She is supposed to have foundered in a very heavy gale of wind shortly after she left. The gale was the heaviest that the headsman, who had been on the island for about sixteen years, had ever experienced.

*Wages and Effects of Deceased Seamen.*—During the year the estates of twenty-seven deceased seamen have been dealt with. One estate, £9 8s. 5d., has been transferred to the Public Trustee; £16 14s. 6d. has been paid to relatives, and £124 0s. 10d. paid into the Public Account in accordance with the provisions of section 87 of "The Shipping and Seamen's Act, 1877." Eight new estates were received during the year.

*Survey of Steamers.*—Certificates of survey under "The Shipping and Seamen's Act, 1877," have been issued to 201 steamers of 29,924 aggregate tonnage, and 9,887 horse-power; as against 193 steamers of 31,595 aggregate tonnage, and 10,627 horse-power last year. A certificate of exemption from survey, and from the employment of certificated master and engineer was issued under the provisions of section 201 of "The Shipping and Seamen's Act, 1877," and subsection (2), of section 2, of "The Shipping and Seamen's Act 1877 Amendment Act, 1885," for the s.s. "Paiaka," for so long only as she was plying within Queen Charlotte Sound and Tory Channel in the fishing-trade.

*Wrecks and Casualties.*—The accompanying table shows an analysis of the casualties reported. Those on the coast of the colony number 35, representing 12,936 tons, as against 39 casualties, affecting 15,952 tons, in the previous year. There is again a decrease in the number of total wrecks within the colony, 3 vessels, of 830 aggregate tonnage, being lost, as against 12 vessels, of 2,464 aggregate tonnage, in the previous year. There is an increase in the number of lives lost during the year, being 121, as against 25 in the previous year; those lost in the colony being 13, as against 15 last year. Of the lives lost on or near the coasts of the colony, 3 were lost from the "Rose Blanche," 2 from the "Maud Graham," and 1 each from the "Compadre," "Ida," "Camelia," "Diana," "Fleetwing," "Fearnought," "Christine," and "Tokerau." Of those lost beyond the colony (108), 19 were lost in the s.s. "Kakanui," 31 in the "Marlborough," 34 in the "Dunedin," 10 in the "Kentish Lass," and 10 in the "Rainbow," each of these vessels having, it is supposed, foundered with the loss of all hands, and 1 each from the "Lady Jocelyn," "Laura," "Brahmin," and "Persian Empire."

Of the miscellaneous casualties reported, three were of a serious character—viz., those to the "Nettie," "Ranee," and "Leading Wind," fire having broken out in the holds of each of these vessels. The "Nettie" and "Leading Wind" were loading New Zealand Phormium at the time of their respective casualties. The "Ranee" was laden with shale, and required to be sunk to extinguish the fire.

*New Zealand Pilot.*—A quantity of information for the preparation of a new edition of the "New Zealand Pilot" was, at the request of the Hydrographer to the Admiralty, forwarded to him. He not only expressed his thanks in a most courteous manner, but a despatch was also forwarded to His Excellency the Governor by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, enclosing a letter from the Admiralty, requesting that the thanks of the Lords Commissioners might be conveyed to the Department of Marine in New Zealand for the assistance rendered by them in connection with the revised edition of the "New Zealand Pilot." It is believed that copies of the new edition will be received in the colony at an early date.

*FISHERIES.—Oysters.* I must again draw the attention of the Government to the desirability of legislating with the view of preventing the entire destruction of oysters, a state of affairs which will, should not the taking of oysters be restricted, not take a very long time to come about. This is an experience which would appear to belong to every country where oysters have been plentiful. The supply has been considered inexhaustible, and not until the oysters have been almost exterminated has the fact been realised that an oyster-bed can be over-fished.

*Imported Fish.*—Fish believed to be grilse have been caught in the Aparima River. It will be desirable, I submit, to continue to prohibit fishing in this river until the question of the acclimatisation of salmon has been settled beyond doubt. The trout in our rivers still continue to increase, and the acclimatisation societies are doing good work in stocking the streams. It would, I think, be desirable to stock the streams of the northern part of the North Island with the Rainbow or Californian trout (*Salmo irideus*), which the experience of the Auckland Society would tend to show is very suitable to the rivers where the temperature of water is in the summer too high for the common brown trout.

*Inspection of Machinery.*—The Act has continued to work without any hitch. It has only been found necessary to take proceedings in a case in which a fatal accident had not been reported as