

The set times for examination of engineers which came into force last year have even the greatest satisfaction.

The position of engineers on steamers has been improved by the amendment to the Shipping and Seamen's Act of last session, which came into force in January, 1897. The days when all that was required of a sea-going engineer was his ability as a workman have gone. With modern machinery, the number of auxiliary fittings, including evaporators, feed-heaters, auxiliary pumping-engines, freezing, electric lighting, hydraulic appliances, and many others, his general knowledge has to be much more extensive, and the ability to cope with difficulties will bring out the most efficient man.

To give the young engineer an incentive to improve his position by his theoretical as well as practical knowledge, the new third-class engineer's examination is open to him without sea-service, and, judging by the standard of those who have already passed this examination in New Zealand, I think the young New-Zealander has nothing to fear in his struggle for a place when opportunity offers.

The following table shows the number of steamers engaged in the respective trades, their tonnage, horse-power, and fees payable for survey:—

Number.	Trade in which engaged.	Fees payable.	Aggregate Registered Tonnage.	Registered Nominal Horse-power.
		£ s. d.		
23	Foreign ... ..	279 10 0	19,557	4,234
64	Home trade ... ..	504 0 0	11,633	3,899
120	River and extended river ...	397 0 0	3,626	2,146½
207		1,180 10 0	34,816	10,279½

Appended is a table giving names of steamers surveyed, tons register, horse-power, nature of machinery and propeller, also trade in which employed.

I have, &c.,

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The Secretary, Marine Department.