

The New Zealand Nautical Almanac for 1906 was issued in December last, and there has been a good demand for it. The A, B, C, and D Tables, prepared by Captain Blackburne, Nautical Adviser to the Department, have been issued, and are now on sale in the colony and Great Britain. The publication has been well received and very favourably noticed in the Press.

*Wages and Effects of Deceased Seamen.*—The estates of sixteen seamen, amounting to £144 0s. 5d., have been dealt with during the year, and the sum of £104 14s. 7d. has been paid to relatives and other claimants. A list of the estates is appended hereto.

*Wrecks and Casualties.*—Attached are tables showing casualties to ships, and an analysis thereof. Those on the coasts of the colony numbered 55, representing 29,601 tons register, as compared with 64, of 32,536 tons register, in the previous year. The total wrecks within the colony were 6, of 1,686 tons register, as compared with 10, of 1,182 tons in the previous year. The number of lives lost was 22, as compared with 8 last year. Of these 21 were within the colony—viz., “Elsie,” s.s., 1; “Echo,” scow, 1; “Hawk,” scow, 1; “Anna,” ketch, 2; “Kapanui,” s.s., 6; “Oban,” scow, 3; and “Moana,” scow, 7.

Provision was made in “The Shipping and Seamen Act, 1903,” for rehearings and appeals in cases of inquiries into wrecks and other shipping casualties, and regulations have been made as to the procedure in such cases.

*Weather-forecasts.*—Captain Edwin has continued the work of forecasting the weather and issuing weather-reports and storm-warnings.

*Government Steamers.*—The “Hinemoa” carried out the work of attending to lighthouses and overhauling, cleaning, and relaying buoys until the middle of October last, when she was laid up for repairs in Auckland, and remained in the contractor’s hands until the end of January. She is now in good condition. She made a trip to the Auckland, Campbell, Antipodes, and Bounty Islands in February and March last for the purpose of searching for castaways and examining the depots which are maintained on those Islands. The depots at Port Ross, on the Auckland Islands, and at Perseverance Harbour, Campbell Island, were rebuilt. When the “Hinemoa” called at the Auckland Islands in May last year she picked up, in Carnley Harbour, the master and crew of twenty-one men belonging to the French barque “Anjou,” which was totally wrecked near Bristow Point on the 5th of the previous February. The men found the depot for castaways at Carnley Harbour, and lived there until picked up by the “Hinemoa,” using the stores put there for use in such circumstances. They also used some of the stores from the depot at Norman Inlet, to which they were directed by notices which were posted up in the Carnley Harbour depot. During the time the “Hinemoa” was undergoing repairs the “Tutanekai” was put into commission to carry on the lighthouse and other work. Besides the ordinary work on the coast, she visited the Kermadec Islands, and examined the depots there, rebuilding that on Curtis Island.

*Lighthouses.*—The keepers have carried out their duties in a satisfactory manner, and all the lights have been properly exhibited. They have been inspected by Captain Bollons when calling at them with stores and oil. During the year I have visited and inspected those at Godley Head, Jack’s Point, Moeraki, Taiaroa Head, Cape Saunders, Nugget Point, Waipapapa Point, Dog Island, Centre Island, and Puysegur Point, which were all found to be in good order and well kept.

The new tower at Cape Campbell has been completed, and the light was shown from it for the first time on the 15th October last. A new workshop has been built at this station, and repairs executed to the dwellings. The condition of the station is now such that, with the exception of the flagstaff which is to be erected shortly, no further work of importance should be required for some years. The following works have been executed at other stations:—

Cape Maria van Diemen: A new ladder at the tower has been erected.

Kaipara Head: A new cart and coal shed have been erected, and owing to the shifting sand being piled up round the landing-store by the wind it had to be moved to a better position.

Akaroa Head: New rings and rollers have been fitted to this light, and it is now working smoothly and well. The principal keeper’s house has been repaired.

Jack’s Point: A Matthews incandescent burner has been procured for this light, and also the necessary apparatus to make it an occulting light. It is necessary that this should be done, as it is found that at present ship’s lights and other lights in the neighbourhood are liable to be mistaken for it. The work of erecting the apparatus and new burner is now being carried out by Mr. Scott, the Department’s lighthouse artificer.

From reports which have been received it would appear to be advisable to adopt this kind of light generally for the New Zealand lighthouses. The oil is vaporised and produces a very brilliant light at a less expenditure of oil than the ordinary burners.

Moeraki: Wash-houses have been erected.

Taiaroa Head: New outbuildings have been erected.

Nugget Point: A schoolhouse for the keeper’s children has been erected. A new house for the principal keeper is badly needed, and it is recommended that provision for it should be made in this year’s estimates.

Puysegur Point: New rings and rollers have been fitted to the light.

Kahurangi: Eighteen acres of bush have been felled on the reserve, and this area has been fenced in and sown with grass to provide pasture for the station horse and the keepers’ cows and sheep.

During the year three lightkeepers have resigned, and one retired on compensation owing to ill health. Five new appointments have been made to fill these vacancies and one which existed at the beginning of the year.

The amount of light dues collected during the year was £29,443 11s. 2d., as compared with £29,310 16s. 3d. during the previous year. Attached is a statement showing the amount received at each port.