

a few minutes before the accident occurred. The stoppage took place in order to sharpen up the saws in the mill. The inquest before the Coroner, who is also the Magistrate in the district, took place at Kumara on the 13th April, and I gave evidence at the inquest. The hearing of the evidence took the whole of the day, and the verdict was not given until late in the evening. The verdict was that no blame was attachable to any one, and there was also a recommendation that an Inspector of Machinery should be placed at Hokitika or Greymouth.

There were several other accidents with machinery, some of which proved fatal. Full particulars of these are given in Returns Nos. 5 and 6.

POSTAL AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS.

The officers of both these Departments very materially assisted this Department. The former collected all the fees for boiler-inspection, and the latter not only looked up defaulters, but assisted in the various prosecutions for breaches of the Act, of which there were several during the year.

MARINE ENGINEERS' EXAMINATIONS.

These examinations for certificates of competency have been held at the following places: viz., Auckland,* Napier,* Wanganui,* Wellington,* Nelson,* Christchurch,* Timaru,* Dunedin,* Invercargill,* Gisborne, Foxton, Greymouth, Reefton, Westport, and Russell.

The total number of applicants who applied to be examined amounted to 224. Of this number, 183 passed these examinations successfully, and forty-one failed. Of those who failed, there were three first-class marine engineers, three second-class marine engineers, fourteen third-class marine engineers, fourteen river engineers, three marine-engine drivers, and four engineers of auxiliary-powered vessels.

A new book of regulations for the examination of marine engineers is in course of preparation, and will be issued shortly. This edition will contain all the new matter contained in the last new Book of Regulations for Engineers, issued by the Board of Trade in Great Britain in 1906.

Return No. 14 gives the names of the successful candidates and the various grades for which they passed, the total number of applicants, total fees payable, and the number of candidates who failed to pass such examinations.

EXPLOSIVES.

During the year 239 written permits were issued by this Department in Wellington for the carriage of explosives on steamers.

ANNUAL SURVEYS OF STEAMSHIPS AND AUXILIARY-POWERED VESSELS.

The annual survey of steamers and other vessels has been well kept up during the year, and all this branch of our work is fairly well up to date. The repairs carried out and followed up to completion at these surveys has entailed a great deal of supervision by the Surveyors of Ships of this Department. The details of inspection are added to every year by the Board of Trade, in new circulars issued for the guidance of Surveyors. This year definite instructions were issued to all Surveyors on the testing of auxiliary piping in steamers. In past years attention has been especially given to main steam-pipes in engine-room of steam-vessels, but these instructions now apply to all auxiliary steam-pipes. The examination of stern shafts is strictly attended to, and in my recent visits to Surveyors all over New Zealand I have particularly impressed upon them to exercise due care in their surveys of ships in all parts. The ships are getting of bigger tonnage every successive year, and in consequence surveys take a much longer time for each vessel than in former years.

From time to time surprise visits have been made to have a look at equipments and vessels generally, but very little out of order has been discovered to complain of. Special requests were made by shipowners for increased passenger-accommodation to cope with the demand for berths by visitors desirous of visiting the Exhibition at Christchurch. A number of steamers had extra accommodation fitted, and several daylight trips were made. The whole of the fittings, ventilation, lighting, &c., of the new passenger-quarters, and the equipments, were supervised by the officers of this Department at all hours to assist shipowners. All these steamers carried their extra passengers without mishap.

The total number of surveys of steamers and auxiliary-powered vessels was 331.

Return No. 15 gives the total number of steamers and oil-engined vessels surveyed by the Surveyors of this Department during the year, and also gives their names, registered tonnage, nominal horse-power, indicated horse-power, and the brake horse-power of oil-engined vessels; also the nature of their machinery and propeller.

The fees received for these surveys amount to £1,849 10s.

SURVEYS OF VESSELS FOR SEAWORTHINESS.

A large increase to the number of these surveys was made this year, there being no fewer than fifty-seven. Some of the vessels affected received extensive damage, which necessitated considerable repairs. Some of the defects were attributable to fire in holds; defects to machinery, including main steam-pipes; fracture of propeller-shafts; damage from heavy weather; loss of rudder through stranding; collapse of furnaces; and collision, &c.

Return No. 17 gives full particulars of each case in detail.

* Places at which examinations were held more than once during the year.