

Proceedings were instituted by the Department in the following cases in connection with seamen: The master of the s.s. "Stormbird," for not giving a certificate of discharge to a seaman; a fine of £1 and costs was imposed. The master of the scow "Irene," for running on expired articles of agreement; a fine of 10s. and costs was imposed. The master of the schooner "Greyhound," for making a false entry in the official log regarding the cook of the vessel; a fine of £30 and costs was imposed. The masters of the s.s. "Rakiura" and s.s. "Manurewa," for not making deposits for the wages, maintenance, and medical expenses of sick seamen; the case against the former was dismissed, and in the latter a fine of 10s. and costs was imposed. The Union Steamship Company, for not making deposit for wages, maintenance, and medical expenses of sick seaman; the case was dismissed, and the Department appealed to the Supreme Court, which dismissed the appeal, on the ground that the man was not wholly incapacitated from performing his duties.

*Masters, Mates, and Engineers.*—The examination of candidates for certificates of competency has been carried out satisfactorily at the various examination ports. 335 candidates passed their examination and 149 failed. Of those who passed, 223 were masters, mates, and engineers of sea-going ships, 50 were masters and engineers of steamships plying within restricted limits, 14 were masters of fishing-boats and cargo-vessels up to 25 tons register, 1 was master of a fishing-boat under 5 tons register, 19 were engineers of sea-going ships propelled by oil-engines, and 28 were engineers of similar vessels plying within restricted limits. Tables showing the names of the persons who received certificates, the classes and grades of the certificates, and of the certificates of exemption from examination as third-class engineers are appended.

The following alterations have been made in the regulations for examinations, viz. :—

- (a.) Requiring candidates for foreign-going and home-trade certificates of all grades to be conversant with the Morse and semaphore alphabets, and with the British Signal Manual.
- (b.) Providing that candidates may attend the lectures in first aid to the injured on successive days.
- (c.) Raising the standard of the form-vision examination; the change to be optional after the 1st March, 1910, and compulsory after the 1st January, 1914.
- (d.) Making certain alterations as regards the examination in the chart.
- (e.) Making certain alterations in the elementary questions in the engineers' examination.

The Shipping and Seamen Amendment Act, 1909, provides that boats, not exceeding 6 tons register which are propelled by mechanical power other than steam, when carrying passengers and freight for hire, are to have a certificated master or engineer. At present such boats under 5 tons are exempt. In order to avoid hardship, certificates of service will be granted to men who have been in charge of the boats for not less than a year prior to the change in the law. Under the new Act fishing-boats up to 10 tons register will be exempt from carrying certificated officers.

The Imperial authorities have requested that applications made by naval officers for certificates without examination shall be sent through the Admiralty, and it has been decided to accede to this request.

The report of the Principal Examiner is appended.

*Registration of Shipping.*—Several vessels which have ceased to exist owing to wreck, being broken up, and other causes have been written off the Auckland register. The owners had not reported the fact that their vessels had ceased to be British ships, and consequently, in order to purge the register, His Excellency the Governor, under authority given by the Imperial Merchant Shipping Act, directed that the registers should be closed. Appended are returns showing the vessels registered in New Zealand on the 31st December last, and the number of seamen and boys employed in them.

*Survey of Ships.*—During the year certificates have been granted to 302 steamers, 73 oil-engine vessels, and 13 inter-colonial sailing-vessels, as shown in the appended returns. Provision for the annual survey of sailing-vessels over 5 tons register engaged in the coastal trade was made in the Shipping and Seamen Amendment Act, 1909, and it will therefore be necessary to arrange for their survey when the Act comes into operation. These surveys will enable the Department to keep a better supervision over the vessels, and should tend to the safety of life and property.

In addition to the annual surveys, the Nautical Surveyors of Ships make surprise visits to vessels, to see that their boats, life-saving appliances, &c., are kept in accordance with the requirements of the law. These officers also measure ships for registration purposes. At Auckland a good deal of inspection-work is carried out in the case of the numerous small sailing-vessels which at present are not subject to compulsory annual survey, and when repairs are found to be required the surveyor advises the owners as to what must be done, and it is found that, as a rule, he has no difficulty in getting the repairs executed. A good many surveys for seaworthiness have been made, but it has not been necessary to formally detain any of the vessels, as the owners have made required repairs on being notified what was required. Following what has been done by the Imperial Board of Trade, a regulation has been made providing that in the case of foreign-going passenger-steamers and immigrant ships that are required to carry more than four boats under davits a motor-boat may be substituted for one of the boats.

*Restricted Limits.*—The following limits have been defined, viz. :—

Westport: Extended river limits for tugs, dredges, and hopper barges to be four nautic miles radius from seaward end of outermost breakwater.

Herekino: River limits to be inside bar.

Greymouth: Extended river limits for tugs and dredges to be within 10 nautic miles radius from signal staff.

Whangamumu: River and extended river limits for passenger, cargo, and fishing-boats—River limits to be in harbour, and extended limits to be four nautic miles from Flat Rock, at entrance, for fishing-boats and three miles from that rock for passenger and cargo boats,