

Wairau: Extended river limits for fishing-boats to be inside a line drawn from White Bluff to Separation Point, Port Underwood.

The Imperial Government, having recognised passenger certificates issued in France, Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Holland to ships belonging to the respective countries as being valid in the United Kingdom, it has been decided to follow the same course in New Zealand.

Prosecutions were instituted by the Department in the following cases: The owner of the scow "Rona," for sending that vessel to sea in an unseaworthy condition; he was ordered to pay a fine of £30, or to undergo six weeks' imprisonment. The master of the s.s. "Clansman," for carrying more passengers than allowed by the vessel's certificate; he was fined £5, and 3s. for each excess passenger. The master of the s.s. "Cygnets," for carrying too many passengers; the case was dismissed. The master of the launch "Mayciss," for not carrying regulation lights; he was convicted, and ordered to pay costs.

*Deck Cargo.*—Regulations have been made providing that scows with flat bottoms, centre-board keels, and beam four times or more the depth of the vessel, and having no hatches, may carry sawn and baulk timber on deck in the intercolonial trade. The voyages which have been made to Australia by scows with deck-loads under these regulations show that the vessels are fit and safe for the trade.

*Deceased Seamen's Estates.*—The estates of thirty-one seamen, amounting to £91 12s. 7d., have been received by the Department during the year, and the sum of £218 12s. has been paid to relatives and other claimants.

*Wrecks and Casualties.*—Tables showing the casualties to ships and an analysis thereof are appended. Those on or near the coasts of the Dominion numbered 83, representing 47,857 tons register, as compared with 90, representing 55,239 tons register, in the previous year. The total wrecks within the Dominion, including the s.s. "Duco," were 11, of 4,517 tons register, as compared with 16, of 6,537 tons register, in the previous year. The number of lives lost was 18, all being within the Dominion, as compared with 119 within the Dominion last year. Of the lives lost, 15 were in the "Duco" and 1 each from the "Cambusdoon," "Flora," and "Huia."

As regards the s.s. "Duco," this vessel left Wellington for the Chatham Islands on the 7th September last, and has not since been heard of. A south-easterly gale came up a few hours after she sailed, and it would appear that it caused the loss of the vessel. Some timber for making fish-boxes similar to some she had on board was washed ashore in Petre Bay, at the Chathams.

The Court of inquiry into the stranding of the s.s. "Kapanui" suspended the certificate of the master, E. J. Wann, for two years. After consideration of the case, His Excellency the Governor reduced the period of suspension to one year.

Appended is a wreck chart showing where the casualties occurred.

Mr. J. N. Day, late second officer of the s.s. "Tottenham," who left that vessel at Westport, having stated that when the "Tottenham," which left Durban about ten days after the "Waratah," was off East London two bodies were seen floating in the sea, his evidence on the matter has been taken by the Collector of Customs and forwarded by this Department to the Board of Trade.

*Coastal Dangers.*—Captain Hooper, of the training-ship "Amokura," searched for and found the rock on which the s.s. "Waikare" struck in Dusky Sound, and Captain Bollons, of the "Hinemoa," discovered another rock in this sound. Notice to Mariners regarding both rocks have been issued, and the Hydrographer to the Admiralty has been notified of their existence, so that their positions may be shown on the Admiralty charts. The various coastal buoys and beacons have been overhauled and painted, and a Pintsch-gas light has been put on the beacon off Jackson's Head, at the entrance to Queen Charlotte Sound, as the light which was on the beacon was not giving satisfaction. As the Okura Reef, in the Hauraki Gulf, is a danger to navigation, it has been decided to erect a beacon on it.

*Nautical Publications.*—The publication of "The New Zealand Nautical Almanac," which is prepared by Captain H. S. Blackburne, Nautical Adviser to the Department, has been continued, and has sold well. Its value has become so well recognised that it is found in most New Zealand vessels, and orders for copies are received from Australia.

The volume of "Tables for Azimuth, Great Circle Sailing, and Reduction to the Meridian, Lat. 85° N. to 85° S.," prepared by Blackburne and Westland, and published by the Department, has been well received by the nautical Press both in Great Britain and New Zealand, and is acknowledged as being undoubtedly the most complete and comprehensive publication on the subject yet issued.

Appended is a return showing the Notices to Mariners regarding New Zealand which have been issued during the year. All such notices are published in the *New Zealand Gazette*, and copies are forwarded to all New Zealand ports for circulation to shipmasters and shipowners. Copies are also sent to all the marine authorities in Australia and Fiji, to the Hydrographer to the Admiralty, and to the hydrographic bureaux at Washington, Pola (Austria), Berlin, and the Hague (Holland).

*Meteorological and Weather Office.*—The Rev. D. C. Bates, who was placed in charge of the office on Captain Edwin's retirement, has been appointed Director of the office, and is performing the duties in a very satisfactory manner. Instead of paying for each telegram sent in connection with the weather forecasts, an arrangement has been made with the Post and Telegraph Department under which this Department pays £8 a year for the messages to each office to which the daily forecasts are sent. This saves a great deal of labour in checking and stamping the telegrams.

For meteorological work, the office has twenty-five second-class stations reporting more or less fully on climatology, and 260 third-class stations chiefly reporting rainfall.

A new observatory has been established in Albert Park, Auckland, and other sites will have to be provided in Wellington and Dunedin to comply with the requirements of the British Meteorological Conference held last year.

The climatological monthly return and annual statistics are published in the *New Zealand Gazette* and Registrar-General's returns, but checking and preparation of past records are going