

*Deck Cargo.*—The regulation which requires deck cargoes to be inspected by an officer of the Department before the carrying vessels leave port is having a very beneficial effect. It tends to the safety of life and property, as it prevents vessels sailing with more cargo on deck than their licenses allow, and also from having it improperly stowed.

The regulations have been amended to enable the Minister to authorize the issue of licenses for the carriage of motor-cars and agricultural implements on the promenade or top or shelter deck of steamers, when he is satisfied that the deck is of sufficient stability to carry them without danger to passengers and crew, and that they cannot be carried on the main deck; and also that ships under 200 tons register trading to bar harbours where only small ships can enter may be allowed by a Superintendent of Mercantile Marine to carry a greater amount of deck cargo than allowed by the regulations, provided the vessel is laden or ballasted to carry such deck cargo and it is compatible with the stability and safety of the ship.

Regulations for preventing collisions at sea which were made by His Majesty in Council, and which under the provisions of section 191 of the Shipping and Seamen Act, 1908, are in force in New Zealand, have been gazetted for public information.

*Deceased Seamen's Estates.*—Moneys belonging to the estates of thirty-five seamen, amounting to £304 9s. 10d., have been received during the year, and the sum of £136 7s. has been paid to relatives and other claimants. The sum of £32 5s. 5d., which had remained unclaimed for over six years, has been paid into the Public Account.

*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 105, representing 46,815 tons register, as compared with 76, of 29,063 tons register, in the previous year. The total wrecks within the Dominion were 6, of 457 tons register, as against 3, of 1,110 tons register, in the previous year. The number of lives lost was 2, as compared with 7 in the previous year. Of the lives lost, one was from the oil-launch "Reremoana," and one in the wreck of the ketch "Bell Flower."

The barquentine "Mary Isabel," 307 tons register, timber-laden, left Whangape for Sydney on the 8th September last, and has not since been heard of. When she sailed her crew consisted of the master, two mates, six able seamen, one ordinary seaman, and a boy. An inquiry was held by the Marine Court at Sydney, to which port the vessel belonged, and the Court found she was well found and provisioned, and that she probably foundered with all hands in bad weather, which occurred soon after sailing.

In consequence of its having been ascertained that the Three Kings Islands were shown in the wrong position on the chart at the time of the wreck of the s.s. "Elingamite," Parliament passed an Act last year to provide for a rehearing by the Supreme Court of the matter of the wreck. The rehearing took place before the Chief Justice, assisted by Captains R. E. Smith and A. D. Chrisp. The rehearing resulted in Captain Atwood, who was master of the vessel at the time of the wreck, being exonerated from blame.

*Coastal Surveys and Dangers.*—During the time the Antarctic ship "Terra Nova" was in New Zealand last year arrangements were made with Lieutenant Pennell, R.N., who was in command of her, to take soundings off the Three Kings, and between there and Cape Maria van Diemen. The work was carried out in a very satisfactory manner, and plans of the soundings have been sent to the Hydrographer to the Admiralty, so that the soundings may be shown on the Admiralty chart. Lieutenant Pennell also took soundings between the Clarence River and Amuri Bluff. It is proposed to arrange for him and a party of his men to make a survey this year between Jackson's Head and the French Pass, as this locality is traversed by a great deal of shipping, and it is therefore important that a fresh and more exhaustive survey should be made.

Captain Bollons, of the s.s. "Hinemoa," has made surveys of a rock near the Twins Rock, Bay of Islands, a rock off Cook Rock in Cook Strait, and a sunken rock off Moko Hinou. The results of the surveys have been published for the information of mariners.

*Nautical Publications.*—The Nautical Almanac, which is prepared by Captain Blackburne, Nautical Adviser of the Department, was issued in December last, and a very large number of copies have been sold. It contains a large amount of information which is of special value to shipmasters and other nautical men. A fresh issue of the Azimuth Tables issued by the Department has been printed.

*Notices to Mariners.*—Appended is a return of Notices to Mariners affecting the Dominion which have been issued by the Department during the year. Copies of these notices are sent to the Hydrographer to the Admiralty, and to some of the foreign Hydrographic Offices, to all the marine authorities in Australia, Tasmania, and Fiji, and to all the harbour authorities, shipping offices, and Customhouses in the Dominion. In addition to these notices, the Department has also issued a large number of notices received from the Imperial Board of Trade, the United States Hydrographic Office, and from the Australian marine authorities.

*Meteorological and Weather Office.*—The duties connected with this office have been carried out in a very satisfactory manner, and the value of the work, especially of the weather forecasting, is thoroughly appreciated throughout the Dominion. This work will become more valuable as the use of wireless telegraphy becomes more extended, as further data than is now available will be obtainable. Additional stations have been established during the year, and the question of establishing 100 more is now under consideration. At present this Department pays the Post and Telegraph Department £8 a year for wiring the daily forecasts to each station, but that Department has offered to send the messages to the 100 additional stations for £400 a year, as by a system of grouping the work of writing and transmitting the forecasts will be reduced. If the arrangement is completed, the Department will then be paying the Postal Department £1,200 a year for telegraphing the daily forecasts.