

they are co-ordinated, has returned to the Dominion after having had practical experience of the examination work in Great Britain. Since his return he has spent some time with the Examiner at Auckland in connection with the changes in the examinations which will shortly be brought into operation in accordance with fresh rules which have been issued by the Board of Trade. This Department asked the Board of Trade to agree to the changes in the examination work being deferred until the end of the war, but it did not see its way to sanction this, and it is proposed to bring them into operation on the 1st October next.

When the new examinations come into force it is intended to hold examinations for foreign-going masters and mates once a month at Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin, instead of once a week as hitherto, which will be following the practice in Great Britain.

The following is the report of Captain H. S. Blackburne, Chief Examiner of Masters and Mates:—

"The work on the whole has been carried out by the Examiners at the four principal ports in a satisfactory manner.

"Owing to the depletion of officers on account of the war the number of examinations held in New Zealand during the last year have again been small, and only about 20 per cent. greater than the number held on the year previous, when examinations were considerably fewer than for several previous years before the war. The number of failures in the examinations amounted to 41 per cent. Many of these, however, pass at second or third attempt within a few weeks of first trial.

"The greatest number of examinations were held this year in Wellington, especially of candidates for the higher grades of certificate.

"Captain William Whiteford, who went to England last year to study the new methods and system of examination to be brought into force this year, returned to the Dominion in March last, after visiting some of the shipbuilding-yards and examination-rooms in the United Kingdom, and spending a considerable time with Principal and Deputy Examiners of Masters and Mates in London.

"The new Regulations for Examination for Masters and Mates having just come to hand from the Board of Trade, it has been decided to bring the new methods and system of examination into force on the 1st October, 1918. Several new subjects are then to be brought into the examination for foreign-going candidates of all grades, including meteorology, shipbuilding, stability, elementary science, astronomy, and essay-writing.

"As the mark system, with a very liberal allowance for mistakes, is then to be brought in for all grades of the examination, it is expected that after the war, when candidates can get the opportunity to study, there will be fewer failures than before.

"Some additions were made to our examinations on the 1st September, 1917, all foreign-going and home-trade candidates being required to attain a minimum speed of eight words a minute in semaphore signalling, and five words a minute in Morse flashing and flag-waving.

"The chart-work problems have also been added to for the junior grade certificates of both foreign-going and home-trade candidates, and, in lieu of the definitions which candidates for second mate, foreign-going, were previously required to do, foreign-going candidates are now required to draw a figure and give an explanation of problem worked.

"One candidate only for the extra-master examination was examined and passed this year (Mr. Leonard Robertson, the master of the Queenstown Government steamers).

"No candidate for second mate, home trade, has ever presented himself for examination. I would suggest that in our new regulations the service for second mate, home trade, be three instead of four years.

"The above-mentioned examinations do not include the examinations for sight test, of which there were thirty, twenty-six passing successfully and four failing to pass the test."

A statement showing the names of persons to whom certificates of competency have been issued during the year, and the grades of the certificates, is appended.

Three prosecutions have taken place during the year for breaches of the law regarding certificated officers. In each case a conviction was obtained and a penalty imposed.

Registration of Shipping.

Returns are appended showing the vessels registered in the Dominion on the 31st December last. There were on that date on the register 184 sailing-vessels of 22,404 registered tonnage, and 376 steamers of 65,092 tonnage. The numbers at the end of the previous year were 190 sailing-vessels of 21,853 registered tonnage, and 390 steamers of 70,442 tonnage. The number of seamen and boys employed on board was 3,562, as compared with 3,520 at the end of 1916.

Survey of Ships.

Certificates have been issued to 246 steamers, 404 oil-engine vessels, and 66 sailing-vessels, as compared with 271 steamers, 465 oil-engine vessels, and 75 sailing-vessels in the previous year. Details as to alterations and repairs to vessels will be found in the appended report of the Chief Surveyor.

In addition to the inspection of cargo gear which is made by the Surveyors at the annual surveys of vessels, there are special Surveyors at Auckland and Wellington whose duty it is to examine such gear and to supervise the loading and discharge of ships.

The question having been raised as to whether further action is necessary for the prevention of accidents to waterside workers, a Commission, composed of the Minister of Marine, the Hon. T. M. Wilford, as Chairman, two representatives of the waterside workers (Messrs. Glover and Roberts), one representative of Harbour Boards (Mr. J. Marchbanks), and one representative of