

An innovation is regard to the description of certificates of competency to be issued has been brought about by the Board of Trade, and that body has departed from the linen-sheet description of certificate, and has now brought into use a certificate in book form, having advantages both in handiness, durability, and in cleanliness; and arrangements are now being made for the issue of an identical bookform certificate in this Dominion. The linen certificate had its disadvantages: it was unhandy, and frequently after years of use became very dirty and almost unintelligible in respect of its contents.

EXAMINATION IN FORM AND COLOUR VISION.

Candidates for examination in form and colour-vision are persons who are serving or who intend to serve in the mercantile marine or in fishing-cessels and who desire to ascertain whether their vision is such as to qualify them for service, and some of the former are sent for examination by their employers at periodical intervals. Sixty-one candidates were examined in form and colour-vision tests, of which number one candidate was referred to the Principal Examiner for further examination. Subsequently he was granted a special examination by the Department, and the result of the special examination showed him to possess a typical red-green colour blindness, thereby rendering him unfit to sit for a certificate as master or mate.

EXAMINATION OF LIGHTKEEPERS IN SIGNALLING.

The light-keepers employed at the lighthouses and signalling-stations under control of this Department are required to undergo periodical tests of efficiency in signalling, and examinations for such purposes are conducted as opportunity occurs. Since inauguration of these examinations three years ago it is pleasing to see that in most cases the results show the lightkeepers to have passed the examination with credit. It is equally pleasing to see that one of the senior lightkeepers, who had been in the Department's service for thirty-five years, voluntarily submitted himself for and was successful in passing this examination.

“NAUTICAL ALMANAC AND TIDE-TABLES.”

This annual publication, in which is provided the necessary astronomical data relating to the sun and other celestial bodies as required for the use of navigators, total predictions, tidal streams, and other information of use to seamen, was issued at its usual time, mid-December, 1924. An important change, for the purpose of achieving uniformity with the “Admiralty Nautical Almanac,” was made in respect of the commencement of the astronomical day at Greenwich (London), which from January, 1925, and onwards is to be reckoned from midnight, and not from midday as formerly. Daily tidal predictions for the ports of Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, Dunedin, Bluff, and Westport are given at present, and it is intended to include tidal predictions for the Port of New Plymouth as soon as this can be arranged for. Tidal-stream predictions for French Pass and Tory Channel also are provided. Late navigational information concerning the ports and the coasts of this Dominion is included, and is found to be of much use to our own and to visiting mariners. Navigational warnings from local and other sources, and sunrise and sunset times for Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill, Westport, Nelson, and New Plymouth, may be obtained from the book.

GOVERNMENT SHIPPING OFFICES.

In the Government shipping offices the administration of the Shipping and Seamen Act has been efficiently carried out. Appended is a statement showing the number of seamen engaged and discharged at the various ports during the year, and the fees received for such transactions. The total number engaged and discharged was 17,929 and 17,941 respectively, as against 17,989 and 17,817 respectively during the previous financial year. The transactions at the four main ports were as follows (the figures in parenthesis being those of the previous year):—

Port.				Engagements.		Discharges.		Fees.					
								£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Auckland	..	..	..	5,742	(6,214)	5,917	(6,228)	1,056	8	0	(1,135	2	0)
Wellington	..	..	..	6,509	(6,099)	6,291	(6,265)	1,163	8	0	(1,114	3	0)
Lyttelton	..	..	..	1,765	(1,854)	1,746	(1,663)	319	18	0	(326	9	0)
Dunedin	..	..	..	1,541	(1,549)	1,620	(1,549)	292	2	0	(287	6	0)

INSPECTION OF SEAMEN.

This service has been maintained. A record of men applying for word is kept for the purpose of filling vacancies as they occur.

SICK AND INJURED SEAMEN.

The total amount paid by shipowners to sick and injured seamen, under the provisions of section 6 of the Shipping and Seamen Amendment Act, 1911, was £17,237 6s. 2d., as against £16,854 8s. 10d. in the previous year.