

In the third case a man was struck on the jaw and his neck was broken by a brake-lever. No one witnessed the accident, but it is surmised that the lever had been jerked upwards by a hauling-rope which had been allowed to override a flange on the shaft to which the brake-lever was secured.

The other case was the accident to a foreman in charge of the machinery of a brickworks. He was severely mangled when he was caught between the gear-wheels of a brickmaking-machine. It is not known what was his object in approaching the gear-wheels whilst they were running. He had been instructed to see to the greasing and oiling of the machinery at the beginning of the day and at midday when it was not in motion. He had the reputation of being an exceptionally reliable foreman, and it was not anticipated that such an accident could have occurred to him. The gear-wheels have now been totally enclosed.

Of the 105 non-fatal accidents reported, fourteen were not connected with machinery. Thirty-two of the remaining accidents occurred at woodworking-machines, 18 at circular saws, 8 at planing-machines, 5 at shaping-machines, and 1 at a lathe. There were 8 lift accidents. A careful investigation of each accident has been made.

Instructions relating to hoists were issued during the year, and machinery of less than 3 h.p. used for spraying fruit-trees was exempted from the provisions of the Inspection of Machinery Act.

EXAMINATIONS OF LAND ENGINEERS, ENGINE-DRIVERS, AND ELECTRIC-TRAM DRIVERS.

These examinations were held at the various offices of the Inspectors of Machinery throughout the Dominion at the regular intervals provided for in the regulations—namely, in the months of May, August, November, and February. In addition, a few special examinations were granted, but the holding of special examinations is not encouraged, as it is considered that the regular examinations are of sufficient frequency, and, unless the circumstances are very exceptional, candidates are expected to arrange to attend the scheduled examinations.

The full list of places where the examinations were held is shown in an appended return, as also is the number of candidates examined at each place. The classes of certificates for which examinations were held were: Extra first-class stationary engineer, first-class engine-driver, second-class engine-driver, steam winding-engine driver, electric winding-engine driver, locomotive-engine driver, traction-engine driver, locomotive and traction-engine driver, and electric-tram driver. The total number of candidates examined was 340; of this number 252 were successful and 88 failed in their examinations.

PROSECUTIONS.

During the year legal proceedings for offences under the various statutes administered by the Department were instituted in seventy-seven cases. Prosecutions under each Act were as follows: Fisheries Act, 54; Harbours Act, 3; Inspection of Machinery Act, 9; Shipping and Seamen Act, 11.

FISHERIES.

The report of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries which is appended hereto deals exhaustively with sea and fresh-water fisheries.

An important feature of this year's work of the Fisheries Branch has been the investigation into the whitebait fishery. For some time past the Department has been gathering information through available sources as to the condition of this fishery as compared with past years. From the information thus gathered, and from investigation made by officers of the Department, there can be no doubt that, speaking generally, there has been a serious depletion, and an effort must be made to conserve the fishery and, if that is possible, to restore it to something of its former plenitude. This can be achieved in only one way, and that is the adoption of regulative measures of catching. To this end draft regulations, which were really a consolidation of the various existing local regulations and suggestions for certain new regulations, were sent out to all interested parties for any suggestions they might have to offer. These replies have all been carefully studied, but they have not been particularly helpful for the reason, which will be readily understood, that most people concerned are apt to look at such questions entirely from their own point of view and express opinions accordingly. The Department can have only one point of view, and that is the preservation of the fishery, and if, as is the case, a fishery has become unduly depleted, to propose measures designed to lead to its restoration. Draft regulations have accordingly been prepared by the Chief Inspector of Fisheries and are now under consideration. As the whitebait-fishing season is now in full swing, it would not be reasonable to bring the regulations into immediate force, but they will, when finally passed, be drawn in such a way as to suspend their operation until a given date, after this season is over, but enabling those concerned to know the conditions under which fishing may be carried out next season.

ROSS DEPENDENCY.

This dependency of New Zealand has attracted particular attention this year because it was used as a base for the operations of the Antarctic expedition of Commander Byrd, and also because of the increase in whaling operations carried on in its waters.

The Department was in no way connected with the Byrd expedition, except to offer such facilities as it was able to do.

As to the whaling expeditions, three floating factories and their attendant whale-catchers operated under license as follows: The "Sir James Clark Ross" and "C. A. Larsen," under license originally issued by the Imperial Government and later transferred to the administration of New Zealand, and the "Southern Princess," a British-owned expedition licensed by New Zealand.