

## NEW LIGHTHOUSE TENDER "MATAI."

This vessel was delivered by the contractors, Messrs. R. and W. Hawthorne, Leslie, and Co., Ltd., on the 12th October, 1930. The vessel was put into immediate commission and has functioned perfectly—a credit alike to designer and builder. The echo-sounding apparatus, which was a subcontract, has, however, failed so far to operate reliably. An expert sent out by the subcontractors is now endeavouring to ascertain the cause, and, if possible, to remedy the trouble.

## ADJUSTMENT AND INSPECTION OF SHIPS' COMPASSES.

During the year 179 compass-adjustments were investigated. The work performed by the licensed Adjusters of Compasses at the various ports has been examined by the Inspectors of Compasses, with the result that a fairly high standard of efficiency has been maintained.

## SHIPPING CASUALTIES.

An appendix to this report shows the number of shipping casualties reported to the Department. It is to be understood that this includes every minor kind of casualty, and does not in any way mean that because sixty casualties were reported that there were sixty occasions when life was endangered on account of the casualty.

Going back to 1924 when the "Ripple" was lost, there have been only three cases up to March, 1931, where loss of life at sea has occurred from casualty to a ship under the Department's survey, as follows:—

S.s. "Ripple," 7th August, 1924: eighteen lives lost.

S.s. "Karu," 28th February, 1926: Two lives lost. These men tried to swim ashore. Others saved by staying with ship.

Auxiliary ketch "Isabella de Fraine," 14th July, 1928: Eight lives lost. Vessel capsized on Hokianga Bar.

Thus in seven years the total loss of life arising from casualty to ships under Department's survey amounts to twenty-eight, or an average of four per annum. It is true that there have been other casualties resulting in loss of life, but these are practically confined to fishing-launches not under the Department's survey, and which has therefore no control over them. No doubt a proportion of these vessels, by reason of faulty design or lack of proper maintenance, are quite unsuitable for the work they undertake, but the fishermen generally will do anything in the way of tonnage-reduction in order to escape survey.

## "NOTICES TO MARINERS" AND NAVIGATIONAL WARNINGS.

Information relative to changes in navigational aids on our coasts and elsewhere, and to the discovery of obstructions, wreckage, &c., or other dangers to navigation, is published in the form of Notices to Mariners, of which fifty-five were issued during the year and distributed locally and to countries which reciprocate in such matters.

## ADMIRALTY CHARTS.

The Admiralty charts stocked by the Department are being increased annually as the demand necessitates. Many hydrographic corrections necessary to the charts occur from time to time, and these corrections are made here so as to ensure that purchasers receive the most up-to-date charts available. The importance of mariners procuring up-to-date charts cannot be too strongly urged, as the value of a chart used for navigation depends upon its accuracy and the inclusion thereon of the corrections to which the chart has been subjected to subsequent to the survey on which the chart is based.

## EXAMINATION OF MASTERS AND MATES.

Considerable changes in the conduct and syllabus of examinations were made by the Imperial Board of Trade on 1st January, 1931, and were brought into force here on the same date in accordance with our usual practice. The majority of the changes embody the recommendations made by a committee which was appointed by the Board of Trade to consider the system of examination then existing.

The new examinations exact from candidates a wider knowledge of their profession and a greater use of their reasoning powers than was formerly the case; and, with few exceptions, the work is eminently practical. The navigation problems are practically modelled in the everyday practice of navigation, and candidates are allowed to solve them by the methods they have been accustomed to use, provided the principles are correct.

The candidates are now allowed to bring their own instruments and slide rules if the approval of the Examiner is obtained before the commencement of the examination. The age of candidates and the sea-service requirements have been increased, but no hardship should result owing to the provision of special clauses in the regulations.

The examination is now divided into three parts—signalling, written, and oral. The signalling part may be passed six months before or after the main examination, but the written and oral parts must be taken together the first time or after a complete failure. If, however, a pass is gained in either the written or oral parts, a partial pass which holds good for six months is granted.

The examinations, as usual, have been held in Auckland, Wellington, and Lyttelton. The total number of examinations held during the year was eighty-eight, of which seventeen were for signalling only. The percentage of passes this year was 46.5, a rate which is slightly below the average for the previous ten years.