

## EXAMINATION IN FORM AND COLOUR VISION.

Fifty-three sight-test examinations were held in the four main ports; 34 per cent. of them being held at Auckland, 32 per cent. at Wellington, 15 per cent. at Lyttelton, and 19 per cent. at Dunedin. Six special examinations were held, at which only one candidate succeeded in passing.

## PUBLICATION OF "NEW ZEALAND NAUTICAL ALMANAC AND TIDE-TABLES."

The "New Zealand Nautical Almanac and Tide-tables" for the year 1931 (twenty-ninth edition) was issued in November last, so as to enable its contents to be available in ample time before the end of 1930 to ships proceeding beyond New Zealand.

## THE "NEW ZEALAND PILOT."

The ninth edition, 1919, of this publication has been under revision for some time and it is hoped to despatch the last signature to the Hydrographer at an early date. This publication, for the year 1931, thirtieth edition, was issued on the 1st November, in accordance with the general desire of shipping companies for their vessels to have the use of it should they be away from the country at the beginning of the year.

## SURVEY OF SHIPS.

The following table shows the number of certificates of survey issued to ships during the year, the figures for the previous year being shown in parentheses:—

Class.	Number.
Seagoing steamships and auxiliary-powered vessels .. ..	186 (202)
Seagoing sailing-vessels .. ..	12 (13)
Restricted-limits steamships and auxiliary-powered vessels .. ..	442 (499)
Total .. ..	640 (714)

The slackness of trade during the present depression is reflected in the reduced number of vessels surveyed for certificates. Of the total number of vessels five sea-going and sixteen restricted-limits vessels were surveyed for the first time. The seagoing vessels are s.s. "Wainui," m.v. "Port Waikato," m.v. "Waka," m.v. "Taupata," and the cable vessel "Iris." The motor-vessels "Waka" and "Taupata" are new vessels built of wood at the yard of Mr. George Nicol, Auckland, and are engaged in the coastal trade. Both have twin screws and are propelled by Diesel engines. The "Waka" has a length of 112 ft. 2 in., and her tonnage is 236 gross and 117 register, and "Taupata" has a length of 117 ft. 8 in. with tonnage 268 gross and 143 register. They are very handy cargo vessels, and are reported to be giving good service. The "Port Waikato" is a new vessel built of steel at Leith in 1929. She is propelled by one set of Diesel engines and has a length of 180 ft., and a tonnage of 668 gross and 342 register. The H.M. cableship "Iris" was transferred to private owners during the year, and consequently surveyed and registered under the Merchant Shipping Act.

The sailing-vessel "Talisman" was converted to an oil-engine vessel. The numbers of sailing-vessels engaged in New Zealand trade are rapidly diminishing, only twelve being surveyed for certificates during the year as against fifty-five ten years ago. An interesting feature of the year's returns is the number of conversions from steam to oil-engines among the small vessels of the coasting fleet. The development of the type of heavy-oil engine suitable for small vessels has been considerable during the last few years. The old type, commonly known as "semi-diesel," and requiring preheating of the combustion chamber of the cylinders by a blow lamp or electrical device has been replaced by a type known as "cold-starting." This type has been fitted in all the vessels converted during the year—viz., in the "Awahou," "Pukeko," "Kapuni," "Kapiti," "Hawera," and "Alexander."

Two hundred and twenty-five vessels were surveyed for sea-worthiness and efficiency under section 226 of the Shipping and Seamen Act. There were also twenty other surveys made, making a total of 245 surveys carried out in addition to the usual periodical surveys, as against a total number of 300 additional surveys in the previous year.

Board of Trade and departmental circulars relating to survey of Diesel engines, fires in coal-bunkers and cargoes, anchors and chain cables, steel for shafting, spare gear for motor-vessels, approved fire-extinguishers, and distress signals were issued during the year.

New Zealand shipping law requires that every trading-ship, whether passenger or cargo carrying, shall be submitted for survey by the Department every year. Having regard to the practice in, say, Great Britain, which does not require cargo-ships to be annually surveyed at all, except in respect of their life-saving equipment and navigation equipment (and that only as opportunity offers), and in the Commonwealth of Australia, which does not require annual survey of cargo-ships (other than life-saving equipment) unless they are not under the survey of an insurance corporation, which is a four-yearly survey, shipowners in New Zealand have long regarded our annual survey as a disability on their operations not imposed on the shipping of other countries. The existing depression in shipping trade has caused them to seek some relief. The whole matter has been threshed out in conference between departmental officers and a committee appointed by the Shipowners' Federation. The Department felt that the principle of annual survey, which has been so long in operation, is one that should definitely be maintained, and in the Regulations and Instructions to Surveyors recently issued this has been done. The Act, while requiring annual survey, does not prescribe what parts of the ship have to be opened up annually for the Surveyor, and, therefore, does not prescribe the measure of survey. In actual practice the survey has not been altogether satisfactory to the Department, because so much is left to the opinion and discretion of the individual Surveyor. Under such