

### *Lighthouse Tender.*

The work of tendering the coastal lighthouses has been efficiently carried out by the s.s. "Matai." In addition to this work, the vessel made one trip to the Chatham Islands with stores and provisions, which, owing to the absence of the regular trading-vessel, had become practically exhausted.

### ADJUSTMENT AND INSPECTION OF SHIPS' COMPASSES.

The regulations for the adjustment of compasses have been carefully administered, and compasses continue to be maintained in a good state of efficiency. The results of the investigation of adjustments show that the work of the Compass Inspectors and Adjusters has been carefully performed. In a few cases it has been necessary to exercise extra supervision on account of the changing magnetic forces in the vessels.

### ADMIRALTY CHARTS.

The number of Admiralty charts stocked by the Department as agent for J. D. Potter and Co., London, has been further increased during the year by the addition of several new charts which have, at different times, been asked for. The charts held by the Department cover a considerable portion of the globe, and it has been necessary, in order to ensure that purchasers receive them corrected to date, to make a considerable number of corrections to them on account of the many changes in navigational details which have taken place during the year. The importance of using up-to-date charts cannot be too strongly urged on mariners, as the value of the chart obviously depends upon it showing a complete record of the changes which have been reported since its publication.

### EXAMINATION OF MASTERS AND MATES.

During the year examinations were held in Auckland, Wellington, and Lyttelton, and were conducted in a satisfactory manner, and in accordance with the Imperial Board of Trade requirements. Examinations were discontinued at Lyttelton in May, and the rooms were closed on account of the decrease in the number of candidates applying for examination.

The system of dividing the examination into three parts—signals, written, and oral—which was introduced in 1931, is working satisfactorily, and is a great advantage to candidates who gain a partial pass, as they are required to pass only in the part they previously failed in, provided they present themselves before the expiration of six months.

Candidates continue to present themselves well prepared for examination, and definite improvement in the work is shown by the low percentage of 7.9 for total failures.

The number of examinations has increased considerably, and is partly the result of the 1931 regulations, which allow special service in home trade to be accepted for foreign-going certificates.

During the year eighty-four examinations were held, of which four were for signals only, one for yacht master in New Zealand waters, and one for colonial pilot. For certificates of competency the percentage of total passes was 49.2, a slight increase on last year, 25.4 per cent. for partial passes, 17.5 per cent. for partial failures, and 7.9 per cent. for total failures. Two candidates passed for a square-rigged sailing-ship endorsement, and one for fore-and-aft sailing-ship endorsement.

### EXAMINATION IN FORM AND COLOUR VISION.

These examinations continue to be held at Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin. During the year fifty-one candidates were examined, one of whom failed in the lantern test. No special, referred, or appeal examination was held during the year.

### HELM OR STEERING ORDERS.

A great change from the long-established practice of giving helm orders was made on 1st January, when the direct system was brought into use on all British vessels.

The new orders, which are directly opposite to the old ones, were agreed upon at the "International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1929," and left a choice of form in which they could be given, the orders "Starboard" and "Port" or "Right" and "Left" being optional. In order to secure uniformity of practice in view of this choice, and also to consider the best methods of making the change the Imperial Board of Trade and representatives from the Navy and mercantile marine held a conference, and recommended the adoption of "Port" and "Starboard" for the new orders. They also made suggestions and recommendations which have proved of considerable help in making the change and carrying on the new orders.

Although it was fully expected that members of the mercantile marine would soon adapt themselves to the change, great credit is due to them for learning the new orders so quickly, and for carrying on so that, up to the present, no accident, resulting from confusion between the old and the new orders, has been reported.

Quite a number of masters and officers have stated that they experienced no difficulty in making the change, and in carrying on under the new system, and that any inconvenience felt at first has practically disappeared.

### MARINE CASUALTIES.

During the year the casualties on or near our coast varied considerably in their nature, and one of them was, unfortunately, accompanied by loss of life.

The number of casualties this year is smaller than usual, and the greater part of them being minor accidents, due to fire, collision, grounding in small harbours, damage by heavy seas, &c. Where it was found necessary, the casualties were investigated by Departmental officers holding preliminary inquiries.