

Formal investigations were held to inquire into the loss of the steam trawler "Serfib," which foundered near Tokomaru, and into the stranding of the coastal motor vessel "Holmglen" on Banks Peninsula near Akaroa.

The circumstances attendant on other major casualties were such that further inquiry was unnecessary.

A list of the casualties is published at the latter end of the report.

THE NEW ZEALAND NAUTICAL ALMANAC AND TIDE-TABLES.

This publication for 1934 (32nd edition) was published, as usual, on 1st November. In co-operation with the different Harbour Boards, every effort is made to keep the port information up to date, so that masters may have the latest available. It is published early so as to be available to masters likely to be away from the Dominion at the beginning of the year.

New plans for Napier, Timaru, Nelson, and Mapua from recent surveys made by the respective Harbour Boards were published this year. Collingwood information was left out, as no reply has been received from the authority in charge of the port as to whether or not any changes affecting navigation of the port had taken place. An additional plan of Port Chalmers berthage supplied by the Otago Harbour Board was also published.

THE 1931 INTERNATIONAL CODE OF SIGNALS.

This new code was brought into international use on 1st January, 1934.

It is now published in two volumes—Volume I for visual and sound signals, and Volume II for radio signalling.

NOTICES TO MARINERS.

Information relative to changes in navigational aids and to the discovery of obstructions, wreckage, or other dangers to navigation, and general information necessary for the use of mariners was published in the form of Notices to Mariners, of which 57 have been issued during the year.

Arrangements were made for the exhibition and inspection of notices received from the Admiralty, Australia, Tasmania, and Suva, at the office of the Superintendent of Mercantile Marine at all ports visited by overseas vessels, and for the inspection of notices received from America, India, and Japan, at the Nautical Adviser's office.

RADIO BEACONS.

After considerable delay from causes entirely beyond control, it has been found possible this year to consider again the question of erecting radio beacons round our coasts. It has been decided to erect a beacon at the new lighthouse on Baring Head, outside Wellington, if after investigation the site proves suitable, and a temporary beacon for experimental purposes at Tiri Tiri, Matangi, Hauraki Gulf. Further proposed beacons will be erected as soon as the controlling circumstances permit.

RADIO CALL SIGNS AND/OR SIGNAL LETTERS.

In accordance with the decision of the International Code of Signals Committee of the Washington Radiotelegraph Conference, 1927, endorsed by the International Radiotelegraph Conference of Madrid, 1932, ships' radio call signs were, on and after 1st January, 1934, used both for wireless and visual signalling, and the visual signal letters which had previously been used were cancelled. Ships which had visual signal letters and were not fitted with radio were allotted new letters from the radio call signs.

The signal letters and/or radio call signs of all ships registered in New Zealand now begin with ZM and, as before, consist of four letters.

RE "CERTIFICATES OF EFFICIENCY AS LIFEBOATMEN."

Arrangements have been made for the examination of seamen, and the issue of certificates of efficiency as lifeboatmen in accordance with the provisions of the "International Conference for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1929," which, although not yet in force in the Dominion, applies to many of the vessels trading here.

The examinations are held at Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin, and the certificates issued by the Superintendent of Mercantile Marine.

The shipping companies are required to provide the necessary lifeboat and gear, and are responsible for getting the men together at the time appointed for the examination.

Since the examination was introduced about 580 certificates have been issued.

SURVEY OF SHIPS.

The following table shows the number of certificates issued to ships during the past five years:—

—				1933-34.	1932-33.	1931-32.	1930-31.	1929-30.
Sea-going steam-ships and motor-ships	..			147	155	153	186	202
Sea-going sailing-ships	..	..	..	4	5	5	12	13
Restricted-limits vessels	..	..	..	389	401	401	442	499
Totals	..	..	..	540	561	559	640	714