

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 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 force in the vessels.

ADMIRALTY CHARTS.

The Department, acting as sub-agent for Messrs. J. D. Potter and Co., London, maintains a stock of Admiralty charts at Head Office, and at the Mercantile Marine Offices in Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin. The stock includes all charts of the Dominion, and also a considerable portion of the globe, which practically includes all ports where non-regular traders are likely to go after discharging in the Dominion.

The charts, after their receipt, are periodically brought up to date and, to ensure that purchasers receive information issued between the dates of correction, a list of Notices to Mariners affecting the charts is maintained at each office for inspection. This procedure has been in operation in the Dominion for some years, and has often been favourably commented on by purchasers. It is gratifying to know that this standard of correction is now a condition in agreements between sub-agents and the Admiralty agent in London.

During the year the Hydrographer issued a new chart, No. 2532, Banks Peninsula to Otago Peninsula; new editions of No. 2513, Napier Port and Harbour; No. 2521, Tauranga Harbour; No. 2535, Cape Egmont to Manukau Harbour; and a new copy of No. 2185, Nelson Anchorages, with large corrections.

The principal changes on No. 2532 included amendments to the coast-line made from Lands and Survey Department plans, new soundings from the Otago Harbour survey between Shag Point and Cape Saunders, and new insets of Timaru and Oamaru Harbours from surveys made by the respective Boards.

Nos. 2185, 2521, and 2513, showed considerable alterations, and were amended from information supplied by the Nelson, Tauranga, and Napier Harbour Boards respectively.

No. 2535 showed amendments to inset of New Plymouth, and a new plan of the wharves from a New Plymouth Harbour Board survey; amended longitude graduation, and numerous minor corrections.

The charts of the main ports in the Dominion are now up to date, and it is hoped that the various Boards will continue to co-operate with the Department and so keep the Hydrographer in touch with the changes that take place.

COASTAL SURVEY.

The existing charts of the New Zealand coast are based to a large extent on surveys carried out very many years ago and are not sufficiently accurate or informative to meet the requirements of modern high-speed shipping running closely to time-table. The Government has been in communication with the Imperial authorities on this matter, with the result that satisfactory financial arrangements have now been concluded, and it is expected that a surveying ship will be made available to commence a resurvey of the whole of the coast-line of the Dominion next year.

EXAMINATION OF MASTERS AND MATES.

During the year examinations were held in Auckland and Wellington, and were conducted in a satisfactory manner, those for foreign-going certificates being in accordance with the Imperial Board of Trade requirements.

The practice of granting a partial pass, which came into force in 1931 with the present regulations, is working smoothly and is thoroughly appreciated by candidates.

The procedure for the extra masters examination has been considerably amended lately, and candidates now have the option of taking the written portion of the syllabus in two parts, a condition being that the oral work must be taken with one of them. A candidate gaining a pass in one or both of the written parts has his certificate endorsed to that effect. These alterations will ease the strain of the examination and should result in a number of candidates coming forward for this certificate.

Fifty examinations were held during the year. For foreign-going and home-trade certificates the percentages were as follows: Total passes, 55·2; partial passes, 20·7; partial failures, 10·3; total failures, 13·8. No candidate passed for sail endorsement.

EXAMINATION IN FORM AND COLOUR VISION.

These examinations continue to be held at Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin. During the year sixty-two candidates were examined, one of whom failed in the lantern test and one in the letter test. One special examination was held during the year. The lanterns were, as usual, examined during the year.

MARINE CASUALTIES.

During the year the casualties on or near our coasts varied considerably in their nature and were of comparatively slight importance, being due to stranding, fire, collision, grounding in small harbours, heavy seas, &c.

Preliminary inquiries into the circumstances attendant on the majority of the casualties were held by the Superintendents of Mercantile Marine, and in no case was it necessary to hold a formal investigation.