

HARBOUR BOARD LEGISLATION.

The following legislation affecting Harbour Boards was passed during the year:—

Auckland Harbour Board Empowering Act.—This Act authorized the Board to procure a second tug for use in the Port of Auckland, to be paid for out of the loan authorized by the Auckland Harbour Board Empowering Act, 1924, as amended by the Auckland Harbour Board Empowering Act, 1926.

Greymouth Harbour Board Amendment Act.—The purpose of this Act was to give effect to the Government's decision to assume direct liability for the loans raised by the Greymouth Harbour Board. The loans were already guaranteed by the Government, and for many years past the Board has received from the Government a substantial subsidy towards interest and sinking fund on the loans. Under the new arrangement, which makes very little difference to the Consolidated Fund, the Government pays the interest and sinking fund and retains the special coal rate of 3d. per ton, while the annual subsidy to the Board is cancelled. The financial relationship between the Government and the Board is now stabilized, which is of definite advantage to both parties.

Napier Foreshore Expansion Act.—This Act authorized the Board to lease to the Napier Borough Council for improvement and recreation purposes a further area of foreshore endowment land vested in the Board on the same conditions as those imposed by the Napier Foreshore Act, 1927.

Napier Airport Act.—This Act authorized the Harbour Board to lease an area of some 245 acres of its endowment reserve to the Napier Borough Council as a site for an airport.

Wanganui Harbour District and Empowering Act.—This Act authorized the Board to expend on the raising of the moles the sum of £5,400, being money authorized to be borrowed by the Board's Act of 1929, for payment of cost of plant and equipment and engineering and other expenses, but not now required for those purposes.

LIGHTHOUSE TENDER.

The s.s. "Matai" has been engaged throughout the year in her ordinary work of tendering the coastal lighthouses, and of overhauling the buoys and beacons under the control of the Department.

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 shows 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 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 corrected to date, and, to ensure that purchasers receive information issued subsequent to the date 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 is now a condition in agreements between sub-agents and Mr. J. D. Potter.

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.

Seventy-four examinations were held during the year. The percentages for foreign-going and home-trade certificates are as follows: Foreign-going—Full pass, 38·9; partial pass, 27·8; failure, 33·3. Home-trade—Full pass, 40; partial pass, 32; failure, 28. One 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 forty-six candidates were examined, three of whom failed in the lantern test and two in the letter test. No special examination was held during the year.

MARINE CASUALTIES.

During the year the number of casualties on or near our coasts was normal, and all were, fortunately, free from loss of life. The casualties varied considerably in their nature, and, with a few exceptions, were of comparatively slight importance. Preliminary inquiries respecting the majority of them were held by the Superintendents of Mercantile Marine.

The most serious casualties were the collision near Timaru between m.v. "Breeze" and the fishing-boat "Bessie," the s.s. "Waipahi" striking a rock near Pencarrow Head, and the stranding of s.s. "Rangatira" near Tom's Rock. In each case it was deemed necessary to hold a formal investigation, and, in the case of the "Rangatira," to further hold a rehearing by the Supreme Court.