

impression that due care is not exercised by the department on this important point. In referring to marine stores Mr. FitzGerald states, "That the articles, such as oil, on which the efficient maintenance of the lights depend, should be supplied without a previous inspection as to quality as well as quantity, especially when no error can be rectified in some cases for several weeks after their delivery, appears to involve some risk as to the proper maintenance of the lights." The quality of the oil referred to is guaranteed by the fact that it is purchased from the Trinity Board in London; it is tested by the Board's inspector before it is shipped, and is the same as that which is used in the English lighthouses. On reaching the lighthouses here the oil is removed from the tins in which it is imported into storage tanks, and the contents of each tank tested before being used. If the oil were to be thoroughly tested in Wellington before it is sent to the lighthouses, each tin would have to be opened, which would involve a large amount of labour and risk of loss of oil. The quantity is attested by the packages it is imported in, which are 5-gallon tins enclosed in cases, similar to those in which kerosene is packed.

A report by the Marine Engineer on the works carried out under his directions for this department is appended hereto.

Light Dues.—The light dues collected during the past year amounted to £6,734 Os. 7d. This is a considerable reduction on the amounts collected during previous years, and has been caused by the abolition of all light dues on coasting vessels.

Government Steamers.—These vessels are both in good order. The "Stella" has been constantly employed in work connected with this department, but has also been able to accomplish a large amount of work for other departments, notably the mail service to the bays and sounds of the west coast of the Middle Island, at which places she now calls every three months. The "Hinemoa" has also, in the absence of the "Stella" on her regular trips, been occasionally employed on services connected with this department. The iron lighthouse tower was conveyed by her from Mana Island to New Plymouth, and safely landed there without any mishap.

Inspection of Machinery.—A report from the Chief Inspector is appended hereto.

Examination of Masters and Mates.—Certificates of competency have been issued during the year to 87 candidates, 56 being for masters, mates, and engineers of sea-going vessels, and 31 for masters and engineers of river steamers.

Surveys, &c.—Several small surveys of reported dangers have been from time to time made by the masters of the Government steamers, but no marine surveys of importance have been made during the past year.

Sir John Coode's reports on Waitara, Westport, and Gisborne (Poverty Bay) Harbours have been received, and have been printed for presentation to both Houses of the General Assembly.

Steam Navigation.—Passenger certificates have been issued to 138 steamers, of 13,897 aggregate tonnage and 5,757 horse-power.

Wrecks and Casualties.—During the past year reports have been received of 64 casualties; of these, 58 were on or near the coasts of the colony: 17 vessels, of 1,351 tons register, being total wrecks; 44, of 7,390 tons, being partial losses; and 4 cases of loss of life only. The total number of lives lost was 44—namely, 8 in the "Acadia," 7 each in the "Colleen Bawn" and "James A. Stewart," 6 in the "Poneke," 4 in the "Jane Hannah," 3 each in the "Anna" and "Three Brothers," 2 in the "Southern Queen" (all these vessels were lost with all hands), and 1 each from the "Lizzie Guy," "Beautiful Star," "Annie Hill," and "Alert." Of the 6 casualties reported as having occurred beyond the colony, 2, of 163 tons, were total losses; 1, of 334 tons, a partial loss; and 3 cases of loss of life only, 3 lives having been lost from the "Loch Dee," and 1 each from the "Pareora" and "Anne Melhuish."

Returns.—The usual returns and wreck chart are appended hereto.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister having charge of the Marine Department.

WILLIAM SEED,
Secretary.

RETURN showing the Amount of Light Dues collected during the Year ended the 31st March, 1881.

					£	s.	d.
Auckland	...	...	...	...	959	14	0
Onehunga	...	...	...	...	2	2	9
Whangaroa	...	...	...	...	0	12	1
Kaipara	...	...	...	...	0	1	10
Russell	...	...	...	...	280	6	0
Mongonui	...	...	...	...	1	19	3
New Plymouth	...	...	...	...	2	10	2
Wanganui	...	...	...	...	1	19	11
Patea	...	...	...	...	0	8	4
Wellington	...	...	...	...	1,313	6	5
Napier	...	...	...	...	61	4	6
Nelson	...	...	...	...	154	2	10
Westport	...	...	...	...	8	9	4
Hokitika	...	...	...	...	0	9	10
Lyttelton	...	...	...	...	1,737	5	9
Timaru	...	...	...	...	112	16	3
Oamaru	...	...	...	...	47	4	0
Dunedin	...	...	...	...	1,471	4	8
Bluff	...	...	...	...	578	2	8
Total	...	...	...	...	£6,734	0	7