

The PRINCIPAL ENGINEER-SURVEYOR of STEAMERS to the SECRETARY of the MARINE DEPARTMENT.

Principal Engineer-Surveyor's Office, Queen's Chambers,
Wellington, 4th April, 1899.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the financial year ended 31st March, 1899. A larger number of surveys have been held this year than in any preceding year, and a large increase to the shipping in New Zealand waters has to be recorded, which is a tangible evidence of the progress of the colony.

The latest steamer additions to the intercolonial service are replete with up-to-date appliances and every comfort for passengers. The s.s. "Manapouri" has been supplied with new engines and boilers, and has been fitted out specially for the South Sea Island trade.

The steam-trawling industry has gone ahead, several additions being made to the existing fleet, and at Napier especially good results have been obtained. Cold storage being always available at that port is of great assistance when dealing with a perishable commodity like fish.

Wooden-ship building, which was almost a dead art, seems to have revived, in Auckland district one shipbuilder having no less than three steamers under construction at the present time.

The usual mishaps have occurred to steamers during the year, such as collapsed flues and combustion-chamber crowns, principally from oil deposits on the surfaces.

The "Mapourika," a new vessel fitted with all the latest appliances, went ashore on the North Spit at the Greymouth bar, and remained there for nearly six months. Had not the vessel been built of mild-steel plating, no doubt she would have left her bones there.

Several accidents have occurred through cargo-lifting gear carrying away and through open hooks unshipping, but in future no open hooks will be allowed for overhead, which should lessen the number of such accidents. The Engineer-Surveyors at the different ports have been notified to bring this regulation into force when making their annual survey of steamers after the 30th June.

The auxiliary-powered sailing-vessels appear to be doing fairly good work on the coast, and several new ones have been added through the year. The question of carrying certificated engineers on these vessels has now been settled, I trust, satisfactorily to all persons concerned. I am sure that it will be for the benefit of the owner to carry engineers who can keep the machinery in much better order, both for economical working, speed results, and upkeep, than when in the hands of the unskilled driver. The very fact of properly qualified men being in charge of the engine-room of these vessels will impart more confidence to passengers by them, and to shippers generally, who have to send produce to catch a market, where time in everything.

The amount of survey work has increased so much during the last two or three years not only owing to the increase of shipping and the scattered nature of the work, but to a number of vessels requiring a large amount of repairs through age and natural decay. At the ports of Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin this work takes up all the time of one Surveyor, as the work requires the closest scrutiny to insure public safety; and, taking the last few years' record from our returns, I do not know of any single instance of disaster traceable to the negligence on the part of the Surveyor.

Numerous special harbour and daylight deep-water excursions have been run by steamers during the year without any mishap.

The following table shows the number of steamers engaged in the respective trades, their tonnage, horse-power, and fees payable for survey:—

Number.	Trade in which engaged.	Aggregate Registered Tonnage.	Registered Nominal Horse-power.	Fees payable.
25	Foreign	25,974	4,715	£ 310 10 0
79	Home trade	14,920	4,403	616 0 0
151	River and extended river ...	3,749	2,490½	465 10 0
255		44,643	11,608½	1,392 0 0

Appended is a table giving return of steamers to which certificates of survey were issued in New Zealand during the year ended 31st March, 1899, including the names of steamers, tons register, horse-power, nature of machinery and propeller, also trade in which employed.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT DUNCAN,
Principal Engineer-Surveyor.

To the Secretary of the Marine Department, Wellington.