Auxiliary-powered Vessels. — The additions to auxiliary-powered vessels have not been so marked this year as in the two previous years, but the craft fitted with this power have, with one or two exceptions, done fairly good work. The tendency now is to put in oil-engines of more power.

Extra Work.—A considerable amount of extra work has been thrown on surveyors this year in the fitting out and equipment of the troopships that took out the New Zealand Contingents to the scene of the war at the Cape. Up to the present all have carried their valuable freight to their destination safely, which is a credit more particularly to the engineers of these vessels, who have not only to look after the propelling machinery, but also water-supply, pumping, lighting, and ventilating, as well as keeping the ship clear of water.

Engineers.—The duties and responsibilities of the engineer on board steamers have been largely increased not only on the large "liner," but also on the cargo-steamer. The progress of our Empire should be the aim of every one, and it is within the power and scope of the marine engineer to advance the progress of the nation by attention to duty, perseverance in educating himself, and studying how he can best insure the highest economy and efficiency in the machinery of which he has charge. The steamers and machinery of other nationalities are in close competition with us. It is therefore the duty of the marine engineer to practise a sensible economy in all things, to make his steamer a commercial success.

Steam-trawling.—A new departure during the year has been the survey and equipment of a steam-trawler for experimental proving of fishing-grounds round our coasts, the vessel chosen being the "Doto," one of the vessels employed trawling at Port Ahuriri. She is of composite build, her principal dimensions being—58 ft. long, 12¼ ft. beam, 5 ft. 7 in. deep; gross tonnage, 28·55 tons; registered tonnage, 19·42 tons; machinery, 13-horse power; single screw.

The trawling industry in and around Port Ahuriri has held its own, and has proved remunerative to owners of steamers engaged in it.

New Appointment.—A. W. Bethune, chief engineer of the Government steamer "Tutanekai," was appointed an additional Surveyor during the year, and commenced his duties on the 16th January, 1900.

Excursions.—No mishap has occurred to any excursion steamer, though numbers have carried their full complement.

Cargo Gear.—The cargo gear, which is now made as safe as it is possible to do commensurate with utility, and in accordance with new regulations enforced in June last year, is giving great satisfaction to those engaged in the discharge and loading of cargo. The open hook could never be relied on. Besides the fitting of the appliance just mentioned, all the small parts of hoisting-gear are carefully annealed as often as possible, to minimise the effects of the crystallizing action of the material under constant strain.

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

Number of Steamers.	Number of Certificates issued.	Trade in which engaged.	Aggregate Registered Tonnage.	Registered Nominal Horse-power.	Fees payable.
					£ s. d.
26	32	Foreign	28,898	5,353	401 0 0
87	92	Home trade	15,454	4,833	447 0 0
147	181	River and extended river ...	3,749	2,416	377 10 0
260	305		48,101	12,602	1,225 10 0

Appended is a table giving returns of steamers to which certificates of survey were issued in New Zealand during the year ended 31st March, 1900, 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.

The Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington.