

Where a number of applications have been received from any district, examinations have been held at a central place to suit the candidates. In the centres, where a sufficient number of applications have been received, intermediate examinations have been held.

A great number of candidates have passed a capital examination, and it is gratifying to find an improvement in the theoretical as well as the practical part of their calling. There is no situation in life in which knowledge derived from books and similar sources may not be made subservient to our interests or conducive to our enjoyments, and if only a beginning is made by a candidate for these examinations he may acquire a taste for self-improvement that will be of value both to himself and to the community in which he lives.

The extra first-class engineer's certificate has not as yet tempted many, but this can be accounted for partly by the stiffness of the examination; but it had to be made a difficult examination to give the certificate a standing.

Six passed for extra first-class engineer, 119 passed for first-class engine-driver, and 386 passed for second-class engine-driver. In service certificates, 685 first-class engine-drivers and 386 second-class engine-drivers were granted.

The time within which application may be made for the granting of service certificates has been extended, by the Inspection of Machinery Act of last session, to the 1st day of January, 1903. The clerical work attached to the granting of these, and the passing of applicants' papers, both for service and competency, and the issue of certificates afterwards, still makes a large increase to our office-work.

#### ACCIDENTS.

I regret to have to report several accidents with machinery, some of which proved fatal, a description of which will be found in Tables Nos. 5 and 6. It is difficult to prevent all accidents; but, taking the amount of machinery in use, the high speeds very often used, and the number of those employed, the number of these accidents is very small.

#### DISTRICTS AND INSPECTORS.

Mr. Blackwood resigned from the Service in the Auckland District. Mr. George McGregor, appointed on 28th June, 1901, filled the vacancy. Mr. Matthew Sharp was appointed on 1st February, 1902, and will be stationed in Otago.

I have pleasure in testifying to the good and faithful work done all round by the Inspectors, often under arduous conditions in the country, with bad roads and journeys to places almost inaccessible. The expense sometimes incurred does not warrant the inspection; but very often, in these remote places, there is more need for the inspection, as the machinery is often found in bad condition through want of the needful repair, which has not been made owing to the plant being so far away from any engineer's shop. At the present time the Auckland, Marlborough, and Nelson North and South Districts are the furthest in arrear, and our present staff is quite inadequate to deal with the ever-increasing work. It is against the law to work any steam-boiler without a certificate, and I consider it imperative that other two Inspectors should be appointed if the work is to be satisfactorily done.

The permanent stationing of an Inspector at Invercargill has been found a great convenience to the public and a saving to the Department, and, it being the centre of a rising agricultural district, machinery is very much used in connection with harvesting and dairying operations, and steam appliances are also being extensively used. Offices should, in my opinion, be opened, say, at Timaru and Nelson in the near future, to save the long journeys which now have to be made from the present district centres; and it would also be a great convenience to the shipping community and to applicants for examinations to have an officer on the spot.

#### POSTAL AND POLICE AUTHORITIES.

The postal and police authorities have again rendered very valuable assistance, the former promptly returning schedules of fees showing whether owners had paid or not, thus enabling us to deal at once with defaulters; and the latter for their work connected with the non-lifting of boiler certificates, and prosecutions arising therefrom and of persons driving engines or in charge of boilers without holding the proper certificates.

#### MARINE ENGINEERS' EXAMINATIONS.

During the year examinations for certificates of competency for chief marine engineers, second- and third-class marine engineers, river engineers, and marine-engine drivers, also for first- and second-class sea-going and for extended-river-limits engineers of powered vessels other than steam, have been held at Auckland, Gisborne, Napier, New Plymouth, Nelson, Westport, Greymouth, Blenheim, Christchurch, Timaru, Dunedin, and Invercargill. In each of the centres three examinations were held during the year.

Table No. 16 gives a list of 188 applicants for examination during the year ending the 31st March, 1902, with the different classes of certificates for which they applied to be examined—viz., seven first-class engineers, nineteen second-class engineers, ninety-six third-class engineers, thirty-five river engineers, twenty-one marine-engine drivers, four first-class engineers for powered vessels other than steam, three second-class engineers for powered vessels other than steam, three engineers for powered vessels other than steam within restricted limits. The fees received in respect of such applications amounted to £188.

The regulations for marine engineers' examination, to be issued shortly, have been revised, and now embrace all the new points of the new edition of the Board of Trade rules. The most notable departure is that the time served on watch as third engineer with a second-class certificate