

*Ballast Regulations.*—The regulations have been amended to provide that, when ballast is composed wholly or partly of shingle or sand, one or two tiers of it in bags are to be stowed on top of the loose shingle or sand and on each side of it to prevent it shifting.

Ballast and sawdust having been put in Whangape Harbour, the necessary action has been taken to stop it.

Proceedings have been taken and fines imposed in the following cases: viz., the master of the oil-engine vessel "Dolly Varden," for carrying passengers without having a certificate entitling the vessel to do so; the owners of the s.s. "Karoro," for carrying more passengers than allowed by her certificate; the owner of the launch "Dot," for running the boat without life-saving appliances; the masters of the s.s. "Daphne" and "Ngapuhi," for carrying more passengers than allowed by the vessels' certificates; the owner of the "Norah Bradshaw," for not carrying the prescribed life-saving appliances; and the master of the scow "Alma," for having the vessel's load-line submerged.

The Life-saving Appliances Rules have been amended, making provision as to the size of life-belts, the material with which they are to be covered, and as to the breaking-strain of their tapes.

*Deck Cargo.*—The regulations have been amended to enable special licenses to be issued as annual licenses instead of being granted for one trip as formerly.

The Department has been urged to amend the regulations to allow scows to carry more deck cargo in the intercolonial trade than provided for in the existing regulations; but this has not been done, as it is considered that these vessels, when making voyages so far away from land where they could not run for shelter in very bad weather, should not be permitted to carry more than already allowed.

*Deceased Seamen's Estates.*—The estates of fifty-one seamen, amounting to £365 13s. 8d., have been received by the Department, and the sum of £25 5s. 10d. has been paid to relatives and other claimants. Of the estates, eighteen were those of seamen lost in the "Loch Lomond," and twenty-one of seamen lost in the wreck of the "Penguin." The "Rio Loge" belonged to New South Wales, and the wages due to her crew have not yet been obtained.

The sum of £129 9s. 5d. belonging to estates which had been in the Department more than six years has been paid into the Public Account. A list of the estates is appended.

*Wrecks and Casualties.*—Tables showing the casualties to ships and an analysis thereof are appended. Those on the coasts of the Dominion numbered 90, representing 55,239 tons register, as compared with 79, representing 48,436 tons register, in the previous year. The total wrecks within the Dominion, including the "Loch Lomond," the place of the wreck of which is uncertain, were 16, of 6,537 tons register, as compared with 8, of 3,442 tons register, in the previous year. The number of lives lost was 119, as compared with 30 last year. Those lost within the Dominion were 117—viz., "Moonah," 1; "Eunice," 1; "Matakana," 4; "Jane," 1; "Loch Lomond," 19; "Kia Ora," 3; "Ngatiawa," 1; "Penguin," 75; and "Rio Loge," 12.

As regards the "Loch Lomond," this ship left Newcastle, New South Wales, on the 16th July, 1908, for Lyttelton with a cargo of coal, and has not since been seen. Wreckage from her has been picked up between Cape Maria van Diemen and the North Cape, and a life-buoy bearing her name was found north of Hokianga.

The "Rio Loge" left Kaipara for Dunedin on the 6th January last with a load of timber, and she was in the company of the "Waratah" and "Isabella de Fraine" off Banks Peninsula on the 14th of that month, and shortly afterwards a southerly gale came up which drove the other two vessels back, and on the 19th the "Isabella de Fraine" passed through floating timber off Kaikoura Peninsula. Timber has since come ashore between Kaikoura and Cape Campbell, and a life-buoy bearing the name "Rio Loge" has been picked up near Island Bay, outside Wellington Harbour.

• Appended is a wreck chart showing where the casualties occurred.

*Coastal Dangers.*—The existence of a dangerous sunken rock on the seaward side of Open Bay Islet, on the west coast of the South Island, has been reported by Captain Bollons, of the Government steamer "Hinemoa," and a Notice to Mariners regarding it has been issued and circulated for the information of mariners.

Attention having been drawn to the fact of a difference of longitude existing in two of the published Admiralty charts, a Notice to Mariners has been issued explaining that the difference is due to the fact that on the charts published from recent surveys made by H.M.S. "Penguin" the official longitude of the Dominion has been adopted, whereas the other charts still keep to the longitude based on determination of a few years back. In transferring positions or courses from one chart to another it is, therefore, advisable to plot the bearing and distance from some point of land rather than to use the actual latitude and longitude given on the chart.

*Meteorological and Weather Office.*—Commander R. A. Edwin, R.N., who has been in charge of this office since the 18th February, 1871, retired on pension on the 31st ultimo. During the long period he has been in charge he has been most assiduous in the discharge of his duties, which have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Department. Pending the appointment of his successor the office is in charge of the Rev. D. C. Bates, who has been Captain Edwin's assistant since December, 1906.

Two branches of meteorology—namely, weather, which is concerned with the passing phases or conditions of the atmosphere day by day, and climatology, which relates to average, extreme, and seasonal conditions—are carried on together. Morning weather-forecasts are made and issued to ninety towns, where they are exhibited at the telegraph-offices, and to ten lighthouses, where they are shown by signals for the information of masters of vessels. Copies of the forecasts are also given for publication in the evening newspapers. Since April, 1908, twenty-two stations have reported at 5 o'clock in the evening, and forecasts have been issued for publication in the