

The Board of Examiners are the Chief Inspector of Machinery (Chairman), the Engineer-in-Chief and the Inspecting Engineer of the Public Works Department, and the Inspecting Engineer of the Mines Department. This Board sat on seven occasions during the year, and dealt with and signed all certificates issued for engine-drivers.

ACCIDENTS.

I am glad to be again able to report that no boiler-explosion has occurred during the past year. This ought to be a convincing proof of the utility of the compulsory inspection of boilers and steam-vessels as carried out in New Zealand.

A number of accidents to employees have to be recorded, some of them proving fatal. A great number of these accidents are due to carelessness, more especially those connected with woodworking machinery. The speeds of most of the machines used in woodworking establishments are high, and an attendant manipulating these should be always alert and attentive. The guarding of saws has been specially dealt with for years; but it is impossible to take away all the risk by guarding, as in doing so the efficiency of the machine would be impaired.

Returns Nos. 5 and 6 give full particulars of each reported accident.

POSTAL AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS.

I have to again thank the Postal and Police Departments for very many services rendered throughout the year in the collection of the inspection fees, and giving effect to the statutory requirements relative to the certificates required for machinery and for drivers of same.

EXAMINATION OF MARINE ENGINEERS.

The examination of marine engineers has been fully maintained during the year, and nothing has occurred to mar the efficient and smooth working of the system adopted at these examinations throughout the Dominion.

Examinations were held at Auckland,* Awanui, Christchurch,* Dunedin,* Gisborne,* Greymouth, Hamilton,* Invercargill,* Napier,* Nelson,* New Plymouth, Russell, Timaru,* Wanganui,* Wellington,* and Whangarei.

By the regulations examinations were held on certain dates at specified places, but when convenient to an Examiner a candidate, if an urgent case, is examined at a time suitable to him. This has been done in many cases at the Head Office during the year.

The nominal horse-power of a marine engine must not be less than 66 n.h.p. to provide qualifying service for a candidate for the second-class engineer's certificate, and not less than 99 n.h.p. for a candidate for the first-class engineer's certificate. The Board of Trade have a set rule for computing the minimum nominal horse-power of a steamship, but do not object to the nominal horse-power being made higher. During the year the Department wrote to several shipowners who had ships a little below the above horse-powers that could provide qualifying service for marine-engineer applicants if raised slightly. The rule for nominal horse-power as adopted by Lloyd's Registry was taken as a basis in such cases, and the nominal horse-power of several ships has been raised. These ships therefore become qualifying ones, and give marine engineers so many more opportunities for serving the qualifying time required. The shipowners kindly co-operated in the matter, and arranged for the altering of the nominal horse-power of their steamers in the cases desired.

During the year the total number of candidates who sat for examination was 297. Of this number, 70 failed. The different classes for which candidates sat were first-class marine engineer, second-class marine engineer, third-class marine engineer, river engineer, marine-engine driver, first-class engineer of auxiliary sea-going powered vessels, second-class engineer of auxiliary sea-going powered vessels, and restricted-limits engineer of auxiliary-powered vessels.

The fees payable for these examinations amounted to £268.

Return No. 14 gives the names of the successful candidates and the various grades for which they passed, the total number of applicants, fees payable, and the number of candidates who failed to pass such examination.

EXPLOSIVES.

During the year 235 permits were issued at Wellington for the carriage of explosives on ships.

SURVEYS OF STEAMSHIPS AND AUXILIARY-POWERED VESSELS.

This division of the Department's work has received close attention during the year, and at the four principal ports especially the work has been fairly heavy.

During the year the total number of vessels of the above class surveyed was 363. The fees received for these surveys amounted to £2,026.

Thirty-three of the steamers surveyed were fitted with new propeller-shafts, 9 had new sets of engines fitted, and 6 were provided with new boilers.

I have enumerated some of the details of survey of several of the ships dealt with. In very few cases, however, were vessels surveyed without repairs or renewals of some kind being done either to the hull, machinery, or equipments. During the past year a great deal of attention was given to the proposal that boilers of cargo-vessels built under the rules of Lloyd's Registry should be permitted to

* Places at which examinations have been held more than once during the year.