

EXAMINATION OF LAND ENGINEERS AND ENGINE-DRIVERS.

Examinations have been held during the year at—Alexandra South,* Auckland,* Blenheim, Christchurch,* Collingwood, Cromwell,* Dunedin,* Eltham, Gisborne,* Greymouth,* Hamilton,* Hawera, Invercargill,* Karamea, Mangarakau, Masterton, Napier,* Nelson,* Pahiatua, Palmerston North,* Timaru,* Waihi, Waitara, Wanganui,* Waverley, Wellington,* Westport,* and Whangarei.

The examinations held were for extra first-class engineers, first-class engine-drivers, second-class engine-drivers, winding-engine drivers (for steam, air, and water), and locomotive and traction engine drivers. The total number of those who sat for these examinations was 653. Of this number, 448 were successful in passing, and 205 failed. Returns Nos. 7 to 13 give full particulars of those who passed these examinations, together with the different grades and classes of examination.

Reciprocal certificates were issued to applicants who held certificates from Commonwealth States as follows: New South Wales, 2; Queensland, 3; Tasmania, 3; Victoria, 5: total, 13.

Regulations for the examination of applicants who wish to be examined for electric-winding certificates were gazetted on the 27th March, 1913, and examinations will take place shortly. Electricity as a motive power is being introduced at some of the mines, and will replace steam. Provision has been made in the regulations to enable those possessing steam-winding certificates to be examined without further service.

EXAMINATION OF ELECTRIC-TRAM DRIVERS.

During the year 105 candidates sat for this examination, and of this number 88 passed and 17 failed. The Department has been indebted to the different Corporations and tramway officials for placing cars at the disposal of the Examiners to test the applicants' practical knowledge in car-manipulation. Great difficulty has been experienced in getting sufficient certificated men to fill the vacant posts at Invercargill during the year, and this will always be the case unless the qualifying service is altered to embrace service outside the Dominion. One prosecution took place during the year, when an uncertificated motorman had been employed to drive cars.

Returns Nos. 14 and 15 give full particulars of those to whom certificates have been issued during the year.

BOARD OF EXAMINERS.

The Board of Examiners met for the conduct of business on ten occasions. A large amount of new business was dealt with, notably in connection with the issue of motormen's certificates for electric tramways. Mr. C. R. Vickerman, Superintending Engineer of the Public Works Department, who had been a member of the Board since the 11th July, 1907, retired from its membership during the year, when he severed his connection with the Government. During the whole of the time he was connected with the Board he was an honoured member of it, and his judgment in all matters proved to be sound and of great service. I trust that he will enjoy his retirement for many years.

ACCIDENTS.

No boiler explosion has taken place during the year in the Dominion, and there has been no accident or injury to any one working at or with boilers. The Department is proud of this result, and I trust this record will be maintained.

With machinery in motion, however, I have to record a number of accidents. Several of these proved fatal, and, as is usual, quite a number occurred to those working with woodworking machinery. There were several accidents with lifts. This class of machinery is installed in nearly all the lofty buildings recently erected in the large centres. A lift is a most useful and handy appliance for goods and for passengers, but its control should be in the hands only of those who thoroughly understand its use. The fencing and guarding of the cages of lifts, and the wells of lifts at staircases and landings in buildings, are inspected by the Department's Inspectors so as to eliminate the danger to inexperienced persons who frequent buildings containing lifts. The safety-appliance gears are tried from time to time to test their readiness to act should the ropes break that support the cage. So far very few accidents have occurred, but the owner cannot be too strongly impressed with the need to see that the person placed in charge of the lift should frequently examine the cage and its connections and immediately report any defect that he thinks may exist to the owner or to the Department.

Returns Nos. 5 and 6 give full particulars of accidents reported to the Department.

POSTAL AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS.

The Department is very much indebted to the officers both of the Postal and Police Departments for valuable assistance rendered during the year. The inspection fees have been collected by the Postal officials, and returns of same sent to this Department. This has enabled the Department to deal with defaulters. The officers of the Police Department have assisted in a great many prosecutions, not only in case of default in lifting certificates, but also in cases where owners have employed engine-drivers without the necessary certificates, and against engine-drivers themselves who have accepted positions without holding the necessary certificates. Action has also been taken in cases where sellers and purchasers of machinery and boilers subject to inspection have failed to notify the Department of these transactions.

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