

Board of Examiners.

The Board of Examiners constituted under section 48 of the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1908, met in Wellington on nine occasions for the conduct of business, when the whole of the certificates were dealt with before their issue to candidates who had passed the examinations under that Act and the Tramways Act, 1908. It is under the last-named Act that the certificates are issued to electric motormen employed on tramways.

Accidents.

I am pleased to have to record that no boiler-explosion has occurred during the year, and such a result is most gratifying to the Department. At every inspection the Department's officers endeavour to locate all defects and to have every weak place strengthened or wasted scantlings renewed. To see everything both inside and outside of a boiler entails very often a great deal of work and inconvenience, but one has only to read of the dire havoc wrought by a boiler-explosion to appreciate what is being done in New Zealand for public safety. I trust that we will have no explosions in New Zealand for many a day.

With moving and other machinery there has been several accidents recorded. A great many of these occurred very simply, and every employer should insist on all his employees taking no risks. If an employee considers that some portion of a machine he is working at should be better guarded he should report it without delay to the owner. Owners throughout New Zealand are most anxious to carry out any suggestion made by an Inspector for improvement in fencing their machinery. Anything that makes for greater immunity from accident should be encouraged and adopted at once.

Postal and Police Departments.

I have to acknowledge many favours from the Postal and Police Departments during the year, and the promptness in dealing with all cases brought before both Departments leaves nothing to be desired.

Examination of Marine Engineers.

Examinations for certificates of competency were held during the year at Auckland,* Christchurch,* Dargaville, Dunedin,* Greymouth,* Half-moon Bay, Hamilton,* Hokianga, Invercargill,* Kohukohu, Mongonui, Napier,* Nelson,* Palmerston North,* Picton,* Pounawea, Russell, Stratford, Tauranga, Timaru,* Tryphena, Wanganui,* Wellington,* Westport, and Whangarei.

The total number of the candidates who sat was 359; 298 passed and 61 failed.

The classes for which examinations were held were: First-class marine engineer, second-class marine engineer, third-class marine engineer, river engineer, marine engine-driver, first-class engineer of seagoing auxiliary-powered vessels, second-class engineer of seagoing auxiliary-powered vessels, and restricted limits engineer of auxiliary-powered vessels.

The new regulations are being prepared, and will contain much new matter, and will be framed to suit the new regulations introduced by the Board of Trade of Great Britain.

The fees received from the candidates examined amounted to £306.

Explosives.

There were 215 permits issued at the Port of Wellington for the carriage of explosives on passenger and cargo vessels.

Annual Surveys of Steamships and Auxiliary-powered Vessels.

This branch of the departmental work has been well maintained during the year, more especially at the ports of Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin. A great many repairs to defective parts of hulls and machinery have been carried out during the year. Oil-launches in increasing numbers have had to be dealt with. In Marlborough Sounds, Hokianga Harbour, and in a great many of our rivers and estuaries these launches, in addition to their use for pleasure purposes, have proved of paramount importance to the settlements in the country. In arranging dates of survey and granting time for the completion of equipments the convenience of owners has been consulted as far as possible.

Home-trade and foreign steamship surveys of all vessels due have been completed and the convenience of shipowners as to time and place of survey have in nearly all cases been met.

Several new vessels have been built in the Dominion during the year, and their construction has been closely watched during their progress on the stocks. Drawings of six new vessels, with their respective specifications, were submitted for the Department's approval prior to construction being commenced. This is a very important detail, for it not only ensures uniformity of practice in shipbuilding, but gives time for any needed alteration in design that may be necessary. Such alteration of detail can be discussed fully before the vessel's construction is started, and avoids subsequent friction between the surveyor and builder or owner.

New Zealand timbers have been largely used for the hull scantlings. One vessel, however, was built of steel in England, then taken to pieces and re-erected at Onehunga. This vessel was of special design for shallow waters. Of the six vessels, three are steamers, and it is a matter for regret that only in one instance were the propelling engines and the boilers made locally. The Board of Trade has amended the "Instructions as to the Survey of Passenger Steamships," and the Department is now using these amended regulations in connection with the surveys of all vessels. The amendments refer to deck-equipments, boiler-construction, refrigerating machinery, and motor-boats. Modern construction in marine engineering is now represented in New Zealand by the introduction of turbine steamers, one of which has water-tube boilers installed.

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