

SHIPPING AND SEAMEN AMENDMENT ACTS.

Regulations have been made under the Shipping and Seamen Amendment Act, 1909, providing that foreign-going and intercolonial steamships registered in New Zealand, and home-trade steamships authorized to carry 150 passengers and upwards at sea, are to be equipped with wireless-telegraph apparatus. The Shipping and Seamen Amendment Act, 1913, having been assented to by His Majesty, was brought into force by Proclamation on the 1st May, 1914. This Act deals with the following matters: The manning of vessels; engagement and discharge of seamen; the appointment of Inspectors of Seamen, who will be required to keep registers of seamen and apprentices desiring employment on ships and to supply them to ships; the fixing of restricted limits for sailing-vessels; for making regulations as to the equipment of scows and all sailing-ships; for classifying vessels for the carrying of deck cargo; and for making regulations to govern the use of surf-boats working from beaches, &c. Regulations dealing with the four last-mentioned subjects are now being prepared.

TRAINING-SHIPS.

An arrangement has been entered into with the Union Steamship Company whereby some of the best boys from the Training-ship "Amokura" are to be regularly taken by the Union Steamship Company on the s.s. "Aparima" and trained as officers without payment of premium. The boys are selected by merit, and four per annum will thus find an excellent opportunity for advancement in the mercantile marine.

LIGHTHOUSES.

The question of the establishment of a lighthouse on the Three Kings is still under consideration. Information is being obtained relative to a proposal that a wireless apparatus should be installed on the Big King to indicate to vessels carrying a wireless compass the position of the ship. The tower for a new light on Karori Rock, in Cook Strait, is in course of erection for which an acetone-acetylene light will be provided. An automatic acetone-acetylene light is also being provided on Channel Island, at the southern entrance to the Hauraki Gulf, and it is proposed to erect a light on Flat Rock in the gulf itself. Automatic lights will be provided at Nelson and Ponui Passage Lighthouses. Eight lighthouses at present using oil-burners are to be provided with incandescent lights, and the necessary apparatus has been obtained.

FISHERIES.

In April last Professor Edward E. Prince, the Canadian Commissioner of Fisheries, arrived in New Zealand to examine and report on our fisheries. He has just concluded a comprehensive examination of the New Zealand fisheries, and his report will be laid before Parliament as soon as it is available. The necessary legislation giving effect to Professor Prince's recommendations will be introduced, if possible, this session.

CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT.

It is worthy of note that the Customs revenue collected during the year ended the 31st March, 1914, was £3,426,744, being an increase of £19,206 over the previous year and £176,744 over the estimate. A comparison of the values of imports and exports for the calendar years 1912 and 1913 reads as under:—

	1912.	1913.
Imports, calendar year, excluding	£	£
specie	20,576,579	21,653,632
Specie	399,995	634,670
Exports, calendar year, excluding		
specie	21,510,132	22,810,363
Specie	258,955	176,359

The ratio of imports to exports remains about the same, but the value of the exports for 1913 is the highest recorded, the nearest approach to last year's figures being in 1910, when the total was £22,152,473 and specie £27,736.

MINING.

The labour troubles during last year seriously affected the coal-mining industry, for the output of coal shows a decrease of 289,610 tons as compared with the output for the previous year.