

Appended is a statement showing the number of seamen engaged and discharged at the various ports in the Dominion during the year, and the fees received for the engagements and discharges. The number engaged was 21,300, and the number discharged 20,500. The fees received amounted to £2,483 2s. 6d. During the previous year the engagements were 22,781, and the discharges 20,783, and the amount of the fees £2,626 19s. The transactions at the four principal ports were :—

	Engagements.	Discharges.	Fees.		
			£	s.	d.
Auckland	5,425	5,294	715	17	0
Wellington	7,485	6,946	948	11	6
Lyttelton	1,805	1,798	257	18	6
Dunedin and Port Chalmers ...	4,045	4,227	261	15	0
During the previous year they were :—					
Auckland	5,844	5,510	769	11	0
Wellington	8,433	7,869	984	15	6
Lyttelton	1,738	1,764	269	8	6
Dunedin and Port Chalmers ...	4,231	3,552	308	11	0

It may be mentioned that no fees are charged for engagements and discharges on transports.

The law provides that a person shall not employ any other person to engage or supply seamen unless he is an owner, master, mate, or engineer of the ship, or is a Superintendent. The assistant manager of the Northern Steamship Company having engaged seamen, proceedings were taken against him for doing so, which resulted in a conviction. The defendant has appealed against his conviction, but the appeal has not yet been heard.

Proceedings for breaches of the law in regard to seamen were taken by the Department in the following cases with the results stated: A. Jolly, master of s.s. "Indralema," for failing to put a man on articles—fined £1 and costs; Captain W. H. Robertson, master of s.s. "Devon," for similar offence—fined £1 and costs; J. McCormick, master of scow "Ranger," for a similar offence—fined 10s. and costs; W. F. Norbury, master of s.s. "Manaia," for going to sea with one seaman short of the statutory number—convicted and ordered to pay costs; and W. Manning, master of s.s. "Maori," for shipping a man who had no discharge from his last ship—fined £1 and costs.

Masters, Mates, and Engineers.

During the year 311 candidates passed their examinations and 80 failed. Of those who passed, 178 were masters, mates, and engineers of seagoing ships; 34 were masters and engineers of steamships plying within restricted limits; and 99 were engineers of restricted-limits vessels propelled by power other than steam. The difficulty which was experienced last year in getting properly certificated second mates for foreign-going sailing and auxiliary-powered ships has continued. The absence of many certificated men at the front is no doubt to a great extent the cause of the scarcity.

The Imperial Government recently suggested that the attainment and maintenance of uniformity in the examinations of masters and mates throughout the British Dominions would be greatly facilitated if arrangements could be made from time to time for some of the Examiners in all the self-governing dominions where such examinations are held to visit Great Britain to study the methods adopted in the Board of Trade examinations and the system by which they are co-ordinated. The matter has been considered by the Government, and it has been decided to send Captain William Whiteford to England for the purpose.

The following is the report of Captain H. S. Blackburne, Chief Examiner of Masters and Mates :—

"The work, as usual, has been carried out by the Examiners at the four principal ports in a satisfactory manner.

"Owing to the war and consequent depletion of officers, the number of examinations for the past year has been even fewer than during the previous two years, being 25 per cent. less than for last year, the number of failures in the examinations amounting to 44 per cent. Many of these, however, pass at second or third attempt within a few weeks of first trial. These failures do not include two candidates who failed in the form vision test and one who failed in the lantern colour test after re-examination by a special Board.

"There has been no candidate during the year for the extra-master examination.

"No new work has been brought into the examination during the year, though very considerable changes are to be introduced within the next twelve months. The whole of the examination in navigation will be brought under the marks system. A specified time will be allotted for each paper, and papers will not be returned to candidates for correction. Candidates will be required to obtain 85 per cent. of the total marks in order to pass. The speed for signalling by the Morse and semaphore is to be increased, and candidates will be required to answer questions on trigonometry, on ship-construction and naval architecture, also on stability and on meteorology; and a master will be required to write an essay on some suitable subject. The particulars of the changes will be notified by a *Gazette* notice to candidates and examiners."

The following proceedings have been taken for breaches of the law regarding certificated officers: P. V. Catling, master of "Enterprise," for going to Auckland Islands without certificated officers—fined £5 and costs; T. W. Vicary, for running launch without certificated man in charge—fined £3 and costs; G. Osborne, for running launch without certificated engineer—fined £5 and costs.

A statement showing the names of persons to whom certificates have been issued during the year, and the grades of the certificates, is appended.