

*Government Steamers.*

The "*Hinemoa*" has been overhauled during the year, and, considering her age, is in good condition. She has been employed on her usual work of taking oil, gas, coal, stores, and provisions to lighthouses, and in shifting lightkeepers and their families from one station to another when transfers have been made. She has also carried on the work of overhauling, cleaning, and painting coastal and harbour buoys and beacons, and has made two trips to the Chatham Islands, one to take down stores for the settlers and to bring produce back, and the other to search for the missing boat from the barque "*Aryan*" and to bring up the master, officers, and the members of the crew who had landed on the islands. The whole of the work, much of which is of a very risky nature, has been carried out in a very satisfactory manner.

S.s. "*Amokura*"—This vessel is still being used as a training-ship for boys, but she has not been to sea during the past season, as when she was stripped for some repairs it was found that her condition was such that it would cost a large sum of money to carry out the work necessary to put her in a good seaworthy condition, and if it had been done, owing to her age further repairs would no doubt be required in the near future. Under these circumstances it was decided to endeavour to obtain another vessel, and the Imperial Government was asked whether it could let the Dominion have one. The request was agreed to, and in order that there may be no doubt that the vessel to be obtained will be suitable for the purpose required Captain G. Hooper, who has been in command of the "*Amokura*" during the time she has been used as a training-ship, has been sent to England to select the most suitable vessel from those available.

There has been no difficulty in getting sufficient boys during the year, and there are still a few applicants waiting for admission when there are vacancies for them. The usual technical-school classes in connection with the ship were carried on during the winter, and as the vessel did not go to sea during the summer the classes were continued in a modified form during that season. The general behaviour of the boys has been good. There has been no difficulty in obtaining employment for them in other ships on completion of their training on the "*Amokura*."

The necessary material and appliances for installing wireless on the vessel have been obtained, but as another vessel is to be procured it is not at present proposed to instal it.

During the year the vessel visited the Southern Islands and the Kermadec Islands to search for castaways and to attend to the provision-depots which are maintained there.

Appended is a return of the boys who have served in the vessel during the year.

S.s. "*Rama*."—This vessel has been lent to the Commonwealth Government for service connected with the war.

S.s. "*Tulanekai*."—Reports have been obtained in regard to the cost of altering this vessel to make her fit for cargo-carrying.

The necessary alterations were carried out to make her fit for mine-sweeping, but when the work was completed a crew could not be obtained, and therefore the vessel was not used.

In May, 1918, the vessel made a trip to Macquarie Island, under charter to the Southern Isles Exploitation Company (Limited), to bring up men and oil, as no other vessel was obtainable. She brought up the men, but owing to bad weather she was only able to ship a small portion of the oil.

In August, 1918, she made a trip to the Chatham Islands under charter to the Chatham Islands Fishing Company, to bring up fish, as the company could not obtain another vessel after the "*Himitangi*" was wrecked, and in November she was got ready and equipped to carry mails between Wellington and Lyttelton during the epidemic if other vessels should be prevented from running, but it was not found necessary to use her for this purpose.

*Lighthouses.*

The erection of the tower for a new light on Flat Rock in the Hauraki Gulf has been completed, and the light has been installed and exhibited.

An Aga automatic light has been ordered for erection on the Ninepins, off the Chetwode Islands, and the necessary steps are being taken to procure the required tower. This light will be of considerable value to vessels in the Wellington-Picton-Nelson trade.

The Department has been urged to erect a light on Old Man Rock, inside Mercury Island, for the benefit of vessels trading between Auckland and places in the Bay of Plenty. A light in this neighbourhood would be of considerable value to vessels in this trade. Captain Bollons, who has examined the rock referred to, states that it is not suitable owing to its steepness, but that a suitable site can be got on Ohena Islet, which is not far from the Old Man Rock, and it is proposed to make provision on the estimates for the cost of a light.

The erection of a new tower for Dog Island light has been completed and two new houses for the keepers have been erected at Tiritiri. New revolving cowlings have been fitted to the towers at Akaroa Head, Portland Island, Moeraki, and Cape Foulwind. Jack's Point machine has been overhauled and the burner altered to give additional support to the mantles. A new crane has been procured for Cuvier Island, and it will be erected shortly. A new crane is to be erected at Stephen Island as soon as arrangements can be made to do the work. New stables have been erected at Akaroa Head. An incandescent light has been installed at Portland Island. Repairs have been carried out to the boat-skids at the French Pass. New verandas have been built on two of the houses at Moko Hinou; this work was carried out by the keepers.

During the year one lightkeeper was transferred to another Department, the appointment of one was not confirmed, one was dismissed for going to sleep on watch, one died, and one resigned. Ten new permanent appointments were made.

Owing to the war there has been considerable difficulty in keeping the lighthouses properly staffed. Temporary keepers have had to be employed at a good many stations, which is not conducive to efficiency. As the war is now over we should soon be able to get sufficient permanent keepers to fill up the vacancies.