

LIGHTHOUSES.

The duties connected with the maintenance of the various lighthouses have been satisfactorily carried out during the year. The permanent staff has been restored to its pre-war strength.

A new crane has been erected at Stephen Island. New winches have been installed at Cape Maria van Diemen to work the overhead conveyer between the island and the mainland, and new dwellings are now in course of erection.

Captain Bollons, master of the s.s. "Hinemoa," has inspected and reported on the various stations. I desire to place on record the great assistance which I have at all times received from him in lighthouse matters.

During the year one keeper retired on superannuation, three were transferred to another Department, four resigned, and eight new keepers were appointed to fill vacancies.

ISSUE OF EXPLOSIVES.

During the year 118 permits were issued at the Port of Wellington for the carriage of explosives on ships.

METEOROLOGICAL AND WEATHER OFFICE.

The work of this division has been well maintained during the past year. The following is the report of the Director on the work:—

"The work of the Weather Bureau has been carried on as usual during the past year. Every morning reports and forecasts are telegraphed to all the chief towns and ports of the Dominion, and in the evening reports and forecasts are issued to the Press Association for the morning papers."

"Weather-reporting is chiefly in the hands of telegraphic officers, who send in their reports at 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. These are forwarded with unfailing regularity and promptitude, and serve as a basis for the forecast. The keen interest and willing co-operation taken in the work by the Telegraph Department secures efficiency; and therefore, although this system of weather-reporting has long been abandoned in many parts of the world, there is, I am pleased to say, no need to advocate a change in this Dominion.

"The postponement of the scheme of district weather-reporting until better times is a disappointment; but partial equipment of reporting-stations at Awanui and Awarua would be of assistance, especially as we have to send out estimated barometric readings with the usual radio weather-forecasts. The full equipment of the wireless stations at Awanui and Awarua, mentioned in last year's report, will, when accomplished, prove of great service in general forecast, particularly if wireless telephony is made available for weather-reporting.

"The work of the Meteorological Office rests mainly upon the voluntary labours of a small army of observers scattered throughout the Dominion. Upon their records, of the rainfall especially, depend great enterprises which are of immense importance to the Dominion, and it is impossible to over-estimate their responsibilities with regard to engineering, hydro-electricity, agriculture, &c., to say nothing of future possibilities with regard to what may be based upon reliable records of the past. This speaks well for the patriotic and scientific spirit of the observers, who in the majority of cases have done so much to promote the knowledge of our climate—one of the chief assets of this Dominion. A few of the records have ceased through unavoidable removal of observers and other causes; but various new stations have been added during the year, and we have further utilized the supply of rain-gauges from the electrical branch of the Public Works Department in this direction. A large increase in stations is, however, necessary in order that more thorough rainfall-survey of New Zealand may be made.

"We have now thirty climatological stations at work over the Dominion, and their work has been on the whole satisfactorily carried on, in spite of difficulties chiefly brought about by lack of necessary instruments to replace those out of order and to more fully equip stations requiring them. There has not yet been any sign of a decrease in the price of meteorological instruments.

"There have been no changes in the staff during the past year."

FISHERIES.

A very complete and instructive report made by Mr. L. F. Ayson, Chief Inspector of Fisheries, is attached, giving full information on the work of his division for the last twelve months. Attached also is an interesting report made by Mr. G. M. Thomson, chairman of the Portobello Fish-hatchery.

Fifteen convictions were recorded during the year in prosecutions for breaches of the Fisheries Act.

WORK DONE UNDER THE INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT.

The Engineer-Surveyors of Ships and the Examiners of Marine Engineers appointed under the Shipping and Seamen Act also act as Inspectors of Machinery, examiners of extra first-class engineers, examiners of engine-drivers (both stationary and locomotive engines), examiners of winding-engine drivers for collieries and mines—all under the Inspection of Machinery Act. They also act as examiners of electric-tramway motormen under the Tramways Act.

NEW BOILERS INSPECTED.

I have again to report a large increase this year in the number of new boilers inspected. There are signs of a revival in the overseas trade in boilers. Many inquiries have been received from overseas firms concerning designs of boilers they propose making for New Zealand. The imported boiler generally forms part of a machine or plant not manufactured in New Zealand, such as traction-engines, road-rollers, steam-shovels, steam-wagons, steam motor-cars, &c. A few of the imported