

DECEASED SEAMEN'S ESTATES.

The estates of ten deceased seamen, amounting to £136 13s. 5d., have come into the hands of the Department during the year, and, including estates previously received, eighteen have been finally administered. A statement is appended showing the estates dealt with and those outstanding. The sum of £9 16s. 10d. has been paid into the consolidated revenue for estates unclaimed for over six years.

WRECKS AND CASUALTIES.

Sixty-two inquiries, involving seventy-one vessels, have been held during the year, of which fifty-five were preliminary and seven Magisterial. Those on or near the coast of the Dominion were sixty-seven, of 40,470 tons register, as compared with seventy-five, of 76,259 tons, for the previous year. The number of lives lost was one, as compared with thirty-one in the previous year.

HARBOURS.

This Department has the control of harbours for which Harbour Boards have not been constituted, and the buoys and beacons at these places have been overhauled, cleaned, and painted under the direction of Captain Bollons, of the s.s. "Tutanekai." He has also attended to the coastal buoys and beacons during the vessel's periodical lighthouse trips.

A large number of plans of harbour-works, including wharves proposed to be constructed, has been submitted to and dealt with by the Department. Those which met the Department's requirements were approved by the Governor-General in Council in accordance with the provisions of the Harbours Act, 1908. A return of the Orders in Council giving the necessary approval is appended.

The sum of £647 15s. 6d. was collected for pilotage and port charges in respect of harbours under the control of the Department, as compared with £1,009 16s. 4d. in the previous year. A return of the amounts collected at the various ports, including the amounts collected at ports under the control of Harbour Boards, is appended.

Appended is a report by the Marine Engineer on the works dealt with by him during the year.

LIGHTHOUSES.

The duties connected with the maintenance of the various coastal lighthouses have been satisfactorily carried out during the year.

The work of tendering the various stations was carried out by s.s. "Hinemoa" until the end of January, when she was laid up. The s.s. "Tutanekai" has been recommissioned and thoroughly overhauled, to enable her to take the "Hinemoa's" place. Inspections of the various stations have been made by Captain Bollons as opportunity permitted.

The sum of £41,311 9s. 6d. has been received as light dues on shipping during the year.

The following repairs, renewals, &c., have been carried out: Erection of two new dwellings at Cape Campbell; one new dwelling at Kaipara Head; erection of new outhouses at Nugget Point; repairs to dwellings at Pencarrow Head. The removal of the lighthouse and dwellings from East Cape to the mainland, for the purpose of safety, is under way.

Owing to the large slips which have occurred on East Island, endangering the safety of the lighthouse and dwellings, it was decided last year to transfer the station to the mainland. A suitable site at East Cape has been selected, and the work is now well under way and should be completed in about two months' time.

During the year two keepers retired on superannuation, three resigned, one was dismissed, and one was transferred to another department. Seven new keepers were appointed to fill vacancies.

ISSUE OF EXPLOSIVES.

During the year sixty-five 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.

"Every morning at 9 o'clock about five hundred observers throughout the Dominion are each making from one to twenty notes upon weather-conditions. These observers are mostly volunteers, who record and forward their observations in monthly returns to the Meteorological Office. Some climatic records go back over seventy years, and were made by some of the earnest and capable pioneers who came to settle this country. A small part of the observations are, however, telegraphed daily to Wellington, and are then collated and published in all the chief centres, being also used as the basis for weather-forecast. It is as if a curtain were raised for a moment throughout the Dominion, giving a glimpse of the atmospheric states prevailing then over the whole country. This general report is not only printed in the newspapers of the day, but it has also historic and international aspects. It is our privilege to utilize the work done in the past for comparison, and avail ourselves of the fruits of the labours of other countries; but we must not lose sight of the fact that this country is a special field for meteorological research for which we of the present generation are under obligation not only to the past and to other countries but also to the future. Although the ordinary every-day records may be far from striking or unusual, yet each item goes to make a mean or sum total representing one of our chief assets—viz., the climate of this Dominion.

"The Meteorological Office was founded in 1867, and great attention was given to the work until 1880, when, in a time of severe retrenchment, the work was greatly crippled. Again, during the late