

demanding of all persons who have charge of such launches. At present, launches which are licensed to carry passengers and cargo may be in charge of persons whose only qualification is an ability to drive the engine of such vessels. In the interests of safety to life and property it would appear necessary that such persons should be qualified so as to enable them to take proper action to avoid collision. The same would apply to pleasure-yachts, of which there are a large number, and the persons in charge of which are not at present required to possess any knowledge of the Collision Regulations, &c., or even to show a slight ability to avoid collision if such became imminent. This matter is now under consideration.

NOTICES TO MARINERS.

Information of importance to vessels, affecting the coasts of the Dominion and localities visited by vessels of the Dominion, also information of value to overseas vessels, mainly relating to changes in aids or obstructions to navigation, has been published. Notices regarding the various changes which occur in our harbours, and the alteration in coastal aids to navigation, have been promulgated amongst shipping as has been found necessary.

RADIO DIRECTION-FINDING FOR NAVIGATIONAL PURPOSES.

The development of radio direction-finding for the use of vessels has proceeded to great length in Europe and America. At present the development of this important phase of radio-telegraphy has slackened somewhat owing to divergence of views as to the best manner of its application and use, some favouring the method of position-lines being supplied to vessels on demand, others favouring the method by which a vessel becomes quite independent and may observe its own position-lines. The time, however, is fast approaching when each vessel may require to find its own position-lines, owing to the development and dimensions of ordinary traffic, also to the delay which oft-times occurs when a vessel wishes to get a position from a shore station.

EXAMINATION IN FORM AND COLOUR VISION.

This examination, which is open to all persons who desire to follow employment at sea, has been performed for fifty-two candidates during the year. Of this number one candidate failed to pass the form-vision part of the test, and two candidates failed in colour-vision. This examination is carried out by the Department's officers at Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin in a manner similar to and with the same instruments as used by the Board of Trade in the United Kingdom.

EXAMINATION OF MASTERS AND MATES.

With the introduction of the new Regulations for the Examination of Masters and Mates, issued in 1923, the scheduled days of examinations were changed from weekly to quarterly, in accordance with the reorganization of the Nautical Adviser's Office. An Examiner now attends at the ports of Auckland and Lyttelton to conduct the examinations when necessary. The new regulations were brought into force so as to conform with the Imperial Board of Trade examinations. These prescribed for increased speed in signalling, and some alterations of a minor character in the other portions of the examination.

This year has again witnessed a decrease in the total number of candidates for certificates for sea-going vessels, the total number of candidates being sixty-nine; the total number of failures being thirty-four, and of successes thirty-five. From past records it would appear that the percentage of passes is slightly greater than usual. Of the total, forty-three were candidates for foreign-going certificates, and fifteen were candidates for certificates for home-trade vessels, and of these twenty-eight passed; whilst eleven were desirous of obtaining certificates for vessels which trade within restricted limits, of which seven passed. The percentage of passes for all grades was 51. Of the foregoing total, three examinations were held for the higher certificate of extra master. Mr. G. H. Kime, an ex-"Amokura" boy, was the only candidate who was successful in passing this examination; and it was pleasing to find that he possessed a good knowledge of the subjects in which he was examined. This examination embraces, in addition to the syllabus for ordinary certificates, advanced questions in stability, naval architecture, magnetism, elementary science, and scientific meteorology. It also embraces an examination in signalling at fair rates of speed. The examination lasts for a whole week, and it is not surprising that few candidates compete for this qualification.

All the examinations have been carried out in conformity with the requirements of the Imperial Board of Trade; and the signalling portion of the examinations is conducted with automatic signalling instruments similar to those used by that body in the United Kingdom. As foreign-going certificates issued in New Zealand are valid throughout the British Empire, it is necessary that the existing regulations in this Dominion should be identical with those issued by the Imperial Board of Trade, and this principle is strictly adhered to.

SIGNALLING EXAMINATION FOR LIGHTKEEPERS.

Since inauguration of this examination, two years ago, the need for attaining efficiency in this important branch of a lightkeeper's duties has received due appreciation by the lightkeepers themselves, and during the past year nine lightkeepers have presented themselves for examination. In each case the candidate was successful in passing the examination prescribed by the Department.

On the occasion of a recent casualty by which a vessel became stranded on the shore beyond visible range of a nearby lighthouse, the signalling services of one of the lightkeepers were requisitioned by the salvors of the stranded vessel over a lengthy period, so as to enable them to maintain regular communication by signalling with the shore when other methods of communication were impracticable.