

It was pointed out, however, that the Sea Carriage of Goods Act is what may be termed an Imperial Act, and any amendment would be subject to His Majesty's assent, and such assent would be unlikely to be forthcoming unless with the concurrence of all other parts of the Empire which have adopted the Act. For this reason, amendment of the Act in the direction suggested did not appear to be a practicable solution of the difficulty.

The question of regulating the transport of this acid in a reasonable and practicable way, and at the same time safeguarding the interest of those concerned in handling the containers, is one of considerable difficulty. The recorded accidents in New Zealand are few, but nevertheless the risk of accident cannot be ignored, and it is desirable that what precautions are possible should be taken in both directions. Investigations to this end are in progress.

EXAMINATION OF MARINE ENGINEERS.

During the year 168 (187) candidates passed their examinations and 121 (119) failed. Of those who passed 70 (91) were engineers of seagoing steamships, 8 (10) were engineers of steamers plying within restricted limits, 21 (33) were engineers of seagoing motor-vessels, and 69 (53) were engineers of motor-vessels plying within restricted limits. The figures in parentheses are those of last year.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY.

The number of inspections carried out during the year total 39,223, as compared with 34,634 during the year 1925-26, an increase of 4,589. Twenty drawings of cranes and thirty-nine drawings of lifts were examined. Circulars were issued in reference to guards for dough-rollers, motor-tractors, cranes, and the inspection of machinery generally.

There were twelve fatal accidents during the year, causing the deaths of thirteen persons. One accident occurred in a Government workshop not subject to the Department's inspection, and three other accidents were in connection with machinery which were subject to inspection, but at the time of the accident had not been inspected by the Department. The machines at which the accidents happened are tractor locomotive, sand-screen, shafting, swing goose saw, circular saw, revolving fan, pumping-engine, lifts (two), water-wheel, loghauler, brickmaking-machine. In all cases the causes of these accidents have been fully investigated, and steps have been taken, wherever practicable, to prevent a recurrence.

During the year there were ninety-eight non-fatal accidents caused by machinery subject to inspection. Thirty-seven of these accidents were caused by woodworking machinery, and five were caused by lifts. Thirteen of the woodworking machinery accidents can be attributed to failure to use the guards provided or to improper adjustment, and even more accidents were due to carelessness on the part of the operator. One operator was so foolhardy as to use his right foot to push a piece of wood through a mechanically fed planer. He lost four toes and part of his right foot in consequence. The five lift accidents were due to the following causes: one to the lift having been loaded to double its rated working-load, one to the injured person jumping out of the cage of a slow-moving lift and misjudging the distance between the cage and the floor above, one to leaning over a lift-well gate, one to the forcing open of an interlocked lift-well gate (subsequent examination of the lock proved it to have wanted oiling but that it was otherwise in good order), and the fifth accident was due to the person riding in the lift being caught by the heel between the moving cage and the floor. In this case the lift was intended for goods purposes only, and a notice was exhibited prohibiting any one from riding in the lift. The remaining accidents were caused by a variety of machines.

A Bill to amend the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1908, was drafted during the recess for presentation to Parliament this session. Power is being sought in the Bill to make regulations relating to the safe working of boilers, machinery, cranes, and lifts. At present cranes and lifts are dealt with as machinery generally, but the time has now arrived for dealing with these separately. It was necessary to redraft several sections of the principal Act in order to give a clearer expression of the law, and several minor amendments were made in order to remove existing anomalies. One of the main objects of the Bill is to clear the way for a consolidation of the legislation on the subject, and it is intended to proceed with this as soon as it is practicable to do so.

INSPECTION OF BOILERS.

The number of new boilers inspected during the year totals 327, as against 342 the previous year. The total number of boilers inspected for the year is 7,986, and for the previous year, 7,895. Plans of boilers of types not in general use submitted include a gas-fired boiler, waste-heat boilers, and electrically heated boilers, and several boilers of ordinary type generally, but with one or more special features introduced. Circulars dealing with autogenous welding repairs and tube-plate staying were issued.

EXAMINATION OF ENGINE-DRIVERS AND ELECTRIC-TRAM DRIVERS.

These examinations were held at the various offices of the Inspectors of Machinery throughout the Dominion at the regular intervals provided for in the regulations—namely, in the months of May, August, November, and February. In addition, a few special examinations were granted, but the holding of special examinations is not encouraged, as it is considered that the regular examinations are of sufficient frequency, and, except in very exceptional circumstances, candidates are expected to arrange that they may attend the scheduled examinations.

The full list of places where the examinations were held is shown in an appended return, as also is the number of candidates examined at each place. The classes of certificates for which examinations were held were—Extra first-class land engineer, first-class engine-driver, second-class engine-driver,