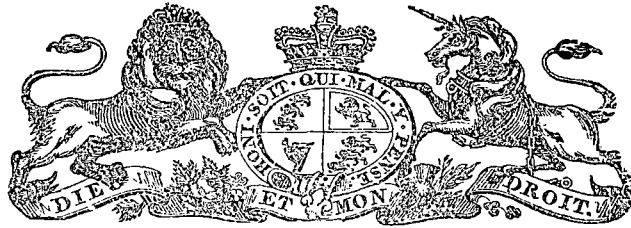


(No. 7.)



1898.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY DEPARTMENT:

REPORT FOR 1897.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.

Cost of printing—£2 2s.



INSPECTION OF MACHINERY DEPARTMENT.

REPORT FOR 1897.

*Office of Inspector of Machinery,
Hobart, February 15, 1898.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to submit to you the following Report of this Department for the year 1897:—

Obituary.

I have to chronicle, with the greatest regret, the sad death of the late Chief Inspector (Mr. John Clark), which took place on October 24, 1897. Mr. Clark had been ailing since the beginning of the year, and doubtless should have sought and obtained a well-earned rest; but he preferred to remain at his post, as the pressure of duties was great at the time. In the death of Mr. Clark the department has sustained the loss of an energetic, painstaking, and much esteemed Head, and myself a valued friend and mentor.

The duty of Acting Chief Inspector has devolved upon me since July of last year, and having only been in touch with the Head Office since then, no doubt many details in this Report will be somewhat incomplete, for which shortcomings I crave your kind indulgence.

Second Assistant.

The Second Assistant (Mr. C. E. Smith) commenced his duties during March. Mr. Smith has since been promoted to the position of First Assistant, and his head quarters are now at Launceston. During the short time that he has been in the service he has proved himself an efficient and painstaking officer, and firm in the execution of his duties. No steps have up to the present been taken to fill Mr. Smith's place, and it is hoped that the vacancy will be filled with as little delay as possible.

Inspections made.

Land Boilers inspected to which Certificates have been granted, 328; ditto inspected, but condemned, 16; Marine Boilers and Machinery inspected, and declarations taken as to fitness, 38. Total inspections made, including survey of iron hull vessels, &c., 721.

Engine Drivers' Certificates.

Fifty-three Certificates have been issued during the year, 21 for Service and 32 Competency, the latter involving the holding of 32 examinations. Besides the above, 17 were examined but failed to obtain Certificates.

Port Engine Drivers' Certificates.

Six candidates presented themselves for examination, four of whom passed and obtained Certificates.

Examinations under "The Merchant Ships Officers Examination Act."

Five examinations were held, three for First-class, and two for Second-class; four passed and obtained Certificates.

Accidents.

I am pleased to be able to report that the number of accidents is steadily decreasing, notwithstanding that the machinery and boilers in use are considerably on the increase. One fatal accident was reported, which occurred at Messrs. Brown and Bradshaw's Saw-mill at Port Esperance. A piece of timber caught on the top of the circular saw and, flying back, struck the man dead; this particular kind of accident is unfortunately of rather frequent occurrence, causing injuries ranging from trivial to fatal, and there is no known method of effectually preventing it, except by the exercise of more care upon the part of the Sawyer. Two other accidents were serious, an arm being lost in each case; E. Boon losing his arm at Bond's bark-mill at Hobart, (he lacking

sufficient presence of mind to throw the feed-rollers out of gear, between which his hand had become entangled), and E. Munday losing his arm in much the same manner in a chaff-cutter at Tea Tree. Six other accidents, fortunately of a trivial nature, were reported, all being the result of a contempt or carelessness born of familiarity with running machinery.

No boiler accidents causing injury were reported during the year.

Fees earned by the Department.

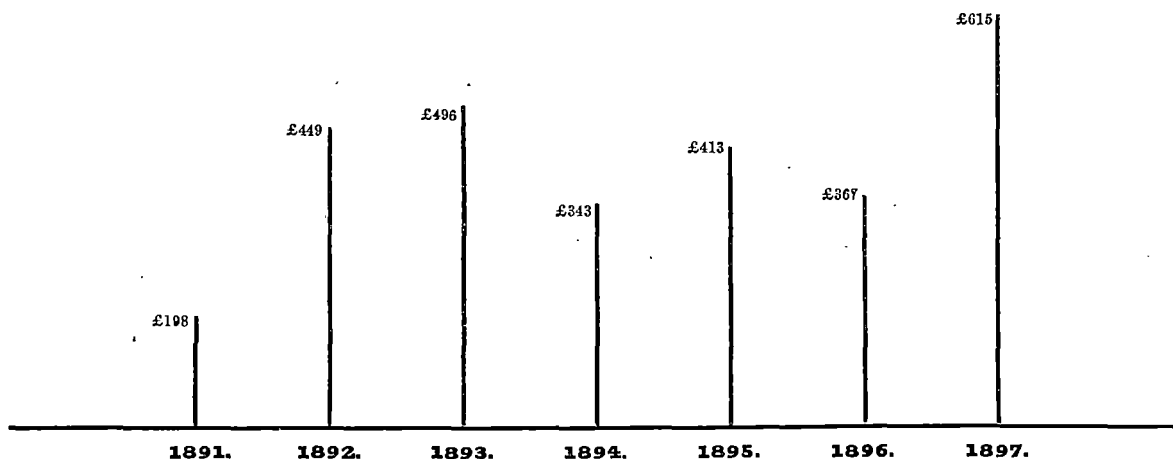
It is my pleasant duty to report that a substantial increase in the amount of Fees earned for the year over those for the year 1896 has taken place, amounting to a sum of £248 5s. 0d.; particulars, with diagram, showing progress of Department, as below :—

TABLE showing Comparative Statement of Fees earned.

Year.	No. of Inspectors employed.	Amount.	Remarks.
1891.....	2	£ 198 15 0	
1892.....	3	449 5 0	2nd Assistant first appointed.
1893.....	3	496 0 0	
1894.....	{ 3 part of time 2 part of time	343 0 0	
1895.....	ditto	413 15 0	1st Assistant resigned; no other appointed.
1896.....	2	367 10 0	
1897.....	{ 3 part of time 2 part of time	615 15 0	2nd Assistant appointed, and efficient Clerk for six months.

EXPLANATORY DIAGRAM.

Years of Collection.



Bearing in mind the short-handed manner in which the Department was managed last year, the above results may be regarded as very satisfactory. I attribute it in a measure to the transfer of the duty of collecting the Fees from this Department to the Office of Taxes, thus giving my officers more time to devote to inspecting. This method works well, thanks to the assistance of the Commissioner of Taxes, to whom I am much indebted for his kindness in enabling me to overcome the many little difficulties inseparable from such a change. With the amendment suggested in a later part of this Report put into practice, the method should give still better results. The temporary appointment of a clerk during the illness of the late Chief Inspector also helped materially in the attainment of the above result, inasmuch as the Inspector in Hobart was enabled to get about on outside duties, through not being hampered by office work. I had anticipated the revenue for the year 1898 at from £900 to £1000, but, owing to the Second Assistant not yet having entered upon his duties, a loss of the valuable summer months has ensued. I am on this account unable to forecast accurately what amount will be obtained, and, owing to the lateness of the season, many boilers must of necessity go uninspected again this year.

Amendments required in the Act.

There are several glaring defects in the present Act, some of which I am desirous of here bringing under notice. Clause 10 will allow of any engine or boiler of eight nominal horse-power or under being left in the charge of any person above the age of a child, male or female, certificated or not. There are many cogent reasons for an alteration here, and it scarcely needs pointing out that serious consequences may at any time ensue from the unskilful or careless handling of, say an eight horse-power winding-engine, placed over a shaft of a mine, where men's

lives are frequently at the mercy of the engine-drivers in charge. This clause could be altered so as to make it apply to winding-engines used for mining purposes in particular. I am aware that recommendations have been made from time to time by the late Chief Inspector, alterations have been urged and attempts made to obtain amending legislation in this particular matter, but hitherto without success. I take the opportunity of emphasising the urgent importance of the above proposed amendment. Clause 33 to be amended somewhat as follows:—"All Fees due for inspections to become, immediately upon such inspection, due and payable to the Commissioner of Taxes, recoverable as in the present amended Act." The present arrangement is open to some objection, for example:—A boiler is inspected on the first of October, and under existing arrangements no return of the fee payable is sent to the Commissioner of Taxes until January 1st of the next year ensuing; in the meantime the owner or lessee of the boiler may have stopped work, and perhaps left the country, or removed to another part, which leads to complications and difficulties easily avoided by the suggested amendment. Further, because no Certificate can be issued until payment of the fee, the owner has to run his boiler during these three months without a Certificate, which is manifestly undesirable.

Synopsis of other Duties performed.

Engineer and Iron Shipwright-Surveyor's to the Hobart, Launceston, Strahan, and Mersey Marine Boards, also Examiners in Steam to the same, and under "The Merchant Ships Officer Examination Act." Examiners of Land Engine-drivers. Inspecting and reporting upon steam-dredges, diamond-drill, machinery on powder-hulk, also for the Defence Department, Printing Department, H. M. Gaol, &c. Advising and valuating for Customs and Patent Departments, &c.

General.

I cannot refrain from pointing out here, that so long as the duties enumerated in the latter part of the above list (which may be termed "outside" work) are thrust upon this Department (and for which no money returns can be shown) it becomes very difficult to organise and carry out the business of regularly inspecting some 500 steam-boilers and their appliances annually, together with the hundred and one incident reports, letters, certificates, records, interviews, enquiries, &c. to be attended to. It should be obvious that this business ought to proceed in a regular and even way, and without interruption, if it is to be executed without annoyance to the general public and in a proper manner. I would also urge upon the Hon. the Minister governing this Department, that we should be credited with the proper fee for all work performed for other departments, as is done in the case of other branches of the Public Service, and if this be authorised, it will at once be seen that the Inspection of Machinery Department is really more than a self-supporting department.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

E. S. ROSS,

Chief Inspector of Machinery.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

RETURN for the Year ending 31st December, 1897.

Description of Information.	No.
Certificates granted to steam-boilers	328
Ditto to machinery only	3
Marine declarations taken	38
Total inspection of land boilers	610
Ditto marine ditto	111
Steam-gauges tested and found serviceable	234
Ditto unserviceable.....	15
Steam-boilers found defective, and owners instructed to repair	41
Steam-boilers condemned	16
Accidents ending fatally	1
Ditto causing serious bodily harm.....	2
Ditto causing bodily harm.....	2
Ditto trivial.....	4
Certificates issued to Land Engine-drivers	53
Ditto issued to Port Engine-drivers	4
Ditto under "The Merchant Ships Officers Examination Act"	4

E. S. ROSS,
Chief Inspector of Machinery.

11. 2. 98.