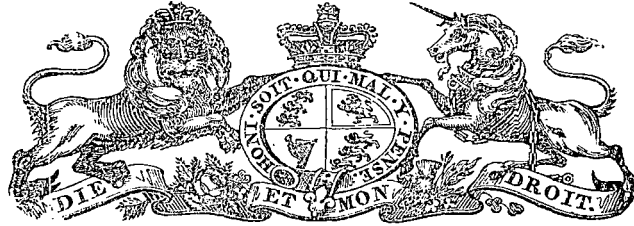


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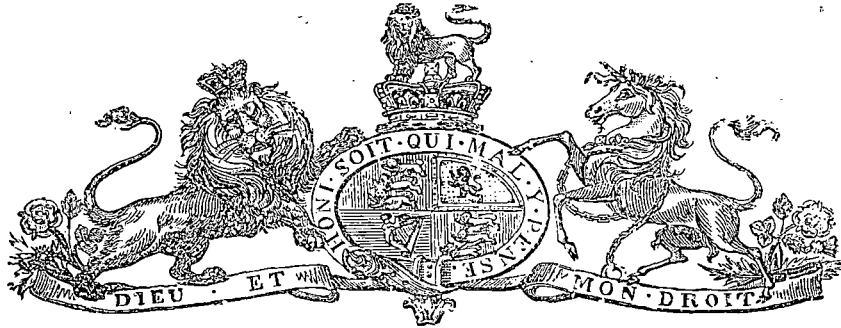
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY DEPARTMENT:

REPORT FOR 1898.

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

Cost of printing—£2.



INSPECTION OF MACHINERY DEPARTMENT.

REPORT FOR 1898.

Hobart, 6th February, 1899.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to submit herewith my Annual Report on the working of "The Inspection of Machinery Act, 1889," for the year ended 31st December, 1898.

General.

On the whole good work has been accomplished during the year. Results are satisfactory, and everything is beginning to work very smoothly.

The Machinery and Boilers throughout the Island are on the increase, and during the year 75 steam plants have been added to those already in use in 1897. The total number of Land Boilers upon the books is now 575, exclusive of Marine Boilers. During 1899 there will be an increase of work to be expected from the various Marine Boards, in the way of the periodical inspection of all steam and other motive power yachts, and their machinery, which have hitherto been exempt.

Very little friction has occurred between the Department and the public during the year, notwithstanding that the number of repairs ordered has been large. Owners are gradually becoming accustomed to the annual visits of the Inspectors, and in most cases welcome them. Not many Boilers have escaped inspection during the year, and I see no reason why every Boiler in the Colony liable under the Act may not be brought under inspection during 1899. The machinery-using public have been warned and instructed by the Inspectors from time to time to direct their employees, operatives, &c. to wear the most suitable and neatest style of clothing, and more especially to discourage the wearing of loose garments, aprons, scarves, &c., when working about running machinery; the need for every vigilance and care has also been enjoined on operatives at the same time. In some cases accidents occur through machinery being added to the original plant after the annual inspection has been completed, and although owners are required to notify the Department when fixing new or altering existing machinery, and generally do, still it is obviously next to impossible for an Inspector to pay a special visit, perhaps to a far away country place, every time a new piece of shafting is added. To eliminate all risk of accident is very difficult, if not impossible.

I note with satisfaction that the other Colonies are one by one imitating the lead of New Zealand and Tasmania, and inaugurating the inspection of Machinery by Government, and during the year several enquiries have reached me for information as to our methods here. So far Western Australia is the only Colony which has actually adopted the system, and passed an Act to that effect. Only some few weeks ago a disastrous boiler explosion occurred at Albury, resulting in the death of one person, serious injury to others, and £3000 worth of damage to property. Although I am not yet acquainted with the full particulars of this accident, I have no hesitation in saying that I believe it would not have occurred had the boiler received periodical competent inspection. Its moral effect will no doubt be to hurry on the adoption of Government inspection. The records of the Manchester Steam Users Association, with whom I am in constant touch, conclusively prove the value of inspection: explosions occurring to boilers under their care being extremely rare, in fact, in almost every case where an explosion does occur it is in the case of an unexpected boiler, or inspected by incompetent and irresponsible agents. The same may be said of the records of other kindred English societies.

Considerable business has been done in the Colony during the past year in the way of construction of new steam-boilers, and every encouragement has been given by the Officers of this Department to both makers and users in order to stimulate local manufacture in this line as much as possible. I am pleased to say that a very large proportion of the boilers manufactured locally up to the present have given and are giving every satisfaction. All boilers so manufactured are inspected during the course of construction by Officers of this Department, and in all cases sound and substantial work insisted upon. I feel bound to add that the manufacturers have met the Inspectors' demands on the whole in the most liberal spirit; and the results have been satisfactory to all concerned. It is a matter for regret that a large number of boilers are still imported from British and Foreign markets, and I look forward with confidence to see at no very distant date a considerable falling off in the numbers of imported boilers, and a corresponding increase in those made locally.

Considerable work has been done for other departments during the year for which no money returns can be shewn; but if this Department requires any service at the hands of another, such as Railway carriage, a charge is made and collected for it.

The amount of correspondence and book work has been very heavy, and every effort has been put forth to give the public every facility for obtaining such information as they wish relative to the requirements demanded from them by the Department.

I will now proceed to particularise the work of the year:—

Number of Inspections made.

Land Boilers inspected, to which Certificates have been granted, 540; ditto inspected, but condemned, 15; Marine Boilers and Machinery inspected, and declarations given, 41. Total inspections, including Marine Surveys, 832.

Engine Drivers' Certificates.

Fifty-five Certificates have been issued during the year, 25 for Service and 30 for Competency. Besides the above, 14 were examined but failed to pass.

Port Engineers' Certificates.

Seven candidates presented themselves for examination, two of whom passed and obtained Certificates.

Examinations under "The Merchant Ships Officers Examination Act."

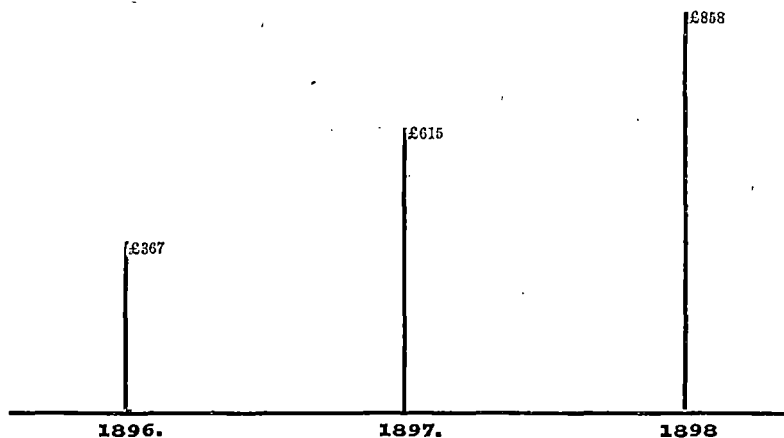
There were five candidates for these Certificates, three of whom passed and two failed.

Accidents.

I am pleased to be able to report that no fatal accident has occurred during the year. There have been 12 other accidents, of which three have resulted in serious bodily injury, one person losing his right arm from the elbow, another losing his left hand, and the last had his ribs broken and was much bruised. The nine other accidents have been of a trivial nature. Only one boiler accident occurred, and this was to a boiler which had not been inspected. In almost every case the accidents have been attributable to carelessness on the part of the persons injured: warning or cautioning seems to have very little effect upon certain classes of persons; they get so much used to working and even skylarking about running machinery, as to become callous, and even a sewing-machine can inflict a nasty wound, given certain conditions, coupled with carelessness.

Fees earned.

I have again to report a very satisfactory increase in the Fees for the past year as compared with 1897, amounting to a sum of £242 5s.; the comparative figures for the last three years are shewn in diagram below:—



When it is taken into consideration that there are unexpended balances for 1898 of £63, making the gross expenditure for the year £897, and when it is further noted that no Fees are paid to this Department for services rendered to other Departments, it becomes evident that the Department has been entirely self-supporting during the past year, with every promise of being considerably more than so during 1899. The system of collecting the Fees works very well, but a lot of time and trouble is found necessary sometimes, when the case of a doubtful ownership occurs, to avoid undesirable complications. I have again to refer to the very obliging manner in which the Commissioner of Taxes has lent me his assistance in adjusting and settling the numerous disputes and knotty questions which arise from time to time under this method of collection. I fully expect the Fees for 1899 to total a sum of £1000, beyond which, unless the machinery in the Colony increases materially, I anticipate no further increment of any importance; but it should be noted with satisfaction that the Department will, under ordinary conditions, henceforth be self-supporting, with every probability of something over.

Amendments required in the Act.

At the risk of repeating what I stated in my Report for 1897, I must again point out the undesirableness of the owners of eight horse-power boilers and engines not being compelled to have certificated drivers in charge of them, more especially in regard to mining engines; for the temptation to put on unskilled men at a low wage in the case of a small party, say of needy tributors for instance, becomes very strong and constantly invites accident. In the case of agricultural boilers the need for reform is not so pressing, and, fortunately, the class of boilers used for that purpose is singularly proof against injury from carelessness and neglect: nevertheless it is significant that the only accident occurring to a boiler during the year happened through the carelessness of an uncertificated driver, and occurred with an engine of less than eight horse-power. I cannot lay too much stress upon the risk attaching to unqualified men being in charge of winding engines for mining purposes, however small these engines may be, as the least carelessness may result in serious consequences, loss of life, injury, &c. I regret that nothing has been done in this matter up to the present, but I hope that some effort will be made to have an alteration made in the near future. As in my Report for 1897, I have again to point out that the interval elapsing between the inspection of a boiler and the issue of the Certificate is under certain conditions far too long, and those boilers which are inspected early in the quarter have to be worked without a Certificate until some time in the next quarter, since no Certificate can be granted until after payment of the Fee prescribed by law, and sometimes where owners are tardy in paying up their Fees, the time of working without a Certificate is much extended beyond the above three months. I would suggest as an Amendment that weekly or at least monthly returns be sent to the Commissioner of Taxes, instead of quarterly as obtaining now. I would also further suggest that it might be possible to evade the difficulty by causing all owners or lessees of steam boilers to register the same with the Commissioner of Taxes every year, at the same time paying the Fees on all boilers which have been in use during the preceding twelve months, the point as to what boilers have been in use and what have not, to be decided by this Department.

Synopsis of other Duties performed.

Engineer and Iron Shipwright-Surveyors to the Hobart, Launceston, Strahan, and Mersey Marine Boards, Examiners in Steam to the same, Examiner under "The Merchant Ships Officers Examination Act," Examiner of Land Engine-drivers. Inspecting and reporting on various Government machinery at Goal, Printing Office, Bonding Warehouse, &c.

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, 1898.

Description of Information.	No.
Certificates granted to land boilers	540
Ditto to machinery only	3
Marine declarations taken	41
Total inspection of land boilers	641
Ditto marine ditto	191
Steam-gauges tested and found serviceable	301
Ditto unserviceable	24
Steam-boilers found defective and owners instructed to repair same	121
Steam-boilers condemned.....	15
Accidents ending fatally	<i>nil</i>
Ditto causing serious bodily harm	3
Ditto trivial	9
Certificates issued to Land Engine-drivers	55
Ditto Port Engineers	2
Ditto Engineers under "The Merchant Ships Officers Examination Act."	3

E. S. ROSS,
Chief Inspector of Machinery.
 6. 2. 99.