

**Emigration Commissioners.** The witness's principal duty is to visit the emigrant ships from time to time by himself and his officers, to see that the requirements of the Passenger Acts are carried out. He inspected the "Cospatrick" four times, three times when she was loading in the East India Docks. The first time she was taking in her dead weight, and so not completely loaded; the second time she had received the bulk of her cargo; the third time she was just finishing. He looked round the hold and in the sheds, and made inquiries of the persons on board, and he knew generally the quantity of oil and spirits she carried, and did not object to it. He examined her boats, and framed his report. (This document was put in.) She had more boat accommodation by a few cubic feet than required by the statute. As a rule, they considered that the boats of a full emigrant ship will carry about one-third of the persons on board the ship, or one-fifteenth of the number of cubic feet. He saw that the abstract of the Order in Council was on board. On the last day he took down from the captain's mouth the cargo on board, having previously inquired himself. On the 10th of September, at Gravesend, the captain informed him that "there were no acids or combustibles on board." He considered his duties as limited and defined by the Act of Parliament.

**By Mr. Dennistoun Wood:** At one time the Emigration Commissioners chartered the ships, and then they had full power. Now the colonies have taken the emigration into their own hands, so that the duties of the Emigration Officers are confined to seeing the Acts of Parliament are complied with. There is a change of persons rather than system, for he thought the emigration before was considered so successful that it was still carried on according to the same system. The Agents-General for the colonies now stand to the vessel as the Emigration Commissioners used to. The practice was to carry such cargo as now. He was aware of the 29th section of the principal Passenger Act, and he did not think that oil, spirits, and things of that kind were within the meaning of the Act likely to endanger the safety of the ship or the lives of the passengers. He did not remember a fire on an emigrant ship before this. He believed that the Commissioners sent out 1,100 ships, of which only five were lost, and he did not think one of them was lost by fire.

**By Mr. Wood Hill:** The line of danger is drawn assuming there is proper discipline, stowing, and care. With proper discipline there is no danger from spirits, and they are not liable to spontaneous combustion. The oil also is safe, and spirits and oil are not what they call "combustibles." By that word he meant such things as gunpowder and "gunpowder stores"—that is, blue lights, rockets, and lucifer matches. Spirits and oil properly stowed are a safe cargo. It is very desirable ships should have cargoes of all sorts. A cargo entirely of railway iron would scarcely be a safe cargo. The general opinion is, that the number of boats prescribed to be carried on emigrant ships is as much as could be, and he believed Her Majesty's troop ships did not carry a sufficient number of boats to save all the people on board. The ships were surveyed under the officers of the Board of Trade from the time they came into dock till when they clear. He suggested things, and they were often done, though not strictly required by the law.

**Re-examined by Mr. Cohen:** The discipline on board Government ships is better than on these emigrant ships. If the cargo caught fire, a ship loaded as this was would have but little chance, but a fire happening to any general cargo of fine goods would, he thought, be equally dangerous as if there were oils and spirits in cargo. In the case of a wooden emigrant ship, with no water-tight compartments, it was almost certain that two-thirds of those on board must perish. That being the case and known, there would always be a rush to the boats, and there would be a great improbability that the boats would be successfully launched. He knew that the Board of Trade had made a regulation suggesting the assignment of a crew and officer to each boat, and directing that, when possible, the crew should be exercised at sea. It is the rule to do that. The outward goods are chiefly dense, and light freight is wanted to trim the ship. If you could have nothing in the emigrant ships but emigrants, the other ships to the colony would be badly loaded. To carry in each emigrant ship only so large a number of emigrants as can be saved by the boats would be a question of expense. It would raise the cost to the Colonial Government and to the emigrants who pay, but would give less chance of importing disease.

**By Captain Pryce:** He never heard of spontaneous combustion in the boatswain's locker. If she had carried double the number of boats, he did not think more lives would have been saved.

**By Mr. Cohen:** No doubt the certainty that the boats would contain all the people would be a great help.

**By Mr. Turner:** The two forward boats were on their keels; the after two, on skids, were kept up. The forward bulkhead was fifteen feet from the stern, measured above. It was strongly built.

**George Sweeting:** Is a foreman stevedore. Stowed the "Cospatrick." He remembered the fore peak of the vessel, which contained coals; there was a bulkhead separating it from the fore hold. He saw some boards taken out of the top of the bulkhead. They were nineteen feet in length, and they were athwart the ship. They were fastened by nails. He did not know of any being taken out at the bottom, but the coals were in the fore peak before he began to stow the cargo. He got into the fore hatch down the hatchway. He saw the boards on top after they had been put up. In the fore hold there was, just abaft the bulkhead, coals about five or six feet high, and they sloped off towards the level of the water tanks. At the fore part of the water tanks there were forty or fifty drums of oil on the coal; the water tanks were within eighteen inches of the deck on both sides of the hatchway. The salt provisions were forward of the water tanks on the starboard side. There was no cargo within seven feet of the forward bulkhead. There was an open space. After that open space came the oil, about three feet high. You did not come to any goods which reached the deck for forty feet. That would be about the distance of the after part of the fore hatch, so that there was an open space on top right along to that part. The goods which touched the deck were large light hogsheads, containing earthenware cases and crates, the roughest stuff he could get to make a bulkhead. The beer was abaft these goods, and the bulkhead would be eight or ten feet fore and aft. The beer also touched the deck. Next to the rough stuff forming the top of the bulkhead were casks of oil. The open space above the cargo till you came to the bulkhead was four feet amidships, and in a part a foot or eighteen inches. On the fore side there was nothing to prevent a person pulling the rough stuff off the bulkhead down. The beer was bottled beer in barrels. The boards in the bulkhead were nailed on the peak or fore side.