

more and more to that every day. But still a steamer could carry one or two boys as well as a sailing vessel. I have come to the conclusion that in a very short time all the coasting trade will be done by steam. What is tending a good deal to that is this, that steamers are now able to get coals at almost every port, and at a low price, and that enables them to take only a small stock at a time, leaving the more room for paying cargo.

*Captain Williams.*

27th July, 1882.

205. *Mr Turnbull.*] But if you trained boys they would do for the steamers?—Yes; there is a great advantage in having the boys on the water at an early age. You will find that boys who are on the water a good deal when young, such as fishermen's boys, are not troubled much with sea-sickness, and, therefore, when they are put aboard a ship, they are much more useful than boys who are sick.

206. Would you think that a training vessel in one place would be enough—say a vessel attached to the Training School, on which might be placed all the boys who had a taste for the sea?—I should think you could readily have a training vessel at each of the four principal ports—Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton and Port Chalmers. The boys are increasing in number every year. When last we required boys we had to send to Auckland for eight.

207. What size vessel would you recommend?—I should think a handy little vessel of about 150 tons or so would do. You should have her brig-rigged, because it is important to teach the boys how to handle the yards, and boys who were taught to handle a brig would always be able to manage a barque. The little barque I spoke of on the Thames, it was astonishing to see how smartly the boys were able to handle her.

208. Would a three-masted schooner do?—Yes, if there were yards on her. That is important, because you want to learn the boys to wear ship, and all the movements in connection with it.

209. *Mr Daniel.*] Don't you think a brig would be most convenient?—I think a brig would do very well, but a three-masted schooner with yards would do just as well.

210. Do you not think now the freezing apparatus is coming into vogue that there will be soon a much greater demand for fish, and that we shall want fishing-smacks?—I do not think we shall ever be in a position to send fish to the Home market. One reason why there is not much fishing here is because meat is so cheap, but, of course, as meat gets dearer fishing will increase. A few years ago hundreds of tons of offal were thrown overboard from the fishing smacks, but all that is now sold readily in the London market on account of the dearness of meat.

211. As we are going to resume immigration, do you not think it would be well to bring out a few good fishermen, with their families and their smacks and the crews?—If you could get them they would do well in the Foveaux Strait, no doubt.

212. Yes, the fishermen that are there now after one trip will not work again till they are clean swept out?—Yes; you will find a good deal of that everywhere. I think the right sort of people would do well down there. As an old fisherman I shall be glad to give any information I can on that subject.

213. *Mr Peacock.*] How long a training would be necessary before you could send boys off as able seamen?—You could never make them able seamen in training vessels; that can only be learnt in actual work and in going about to different places, and if you kept boys too long in the training vessels, it would be apt to give them an inclination for a lazy life. What is wanted is to give them a year or two of training, and then send them off to merchant vessels.

214. We have it in the evidence of a previous witness, that some shipowners do not care to be troubled with boys. Do you not think if the boys were made pretty efficient, first of all, on training vessels, this would overcome the aversion to taking boys on the part of the owners?—Of course a trained boy would be often taken where an untrained one would not be. But if you compel masters to take boys, you should also make provision so that these boys would not have too much their own way. A great deal of the cause of the dislike to taking boys comes from this, that the lads have too much their own way, and if they are brought before the Court for anything, the sympathies of the Magistrates are always with the boys, and the master always gets the worst of it; masters, therefore, will very often not be troubled with boys on that account. Masters should have power to keep the boys straight, and not allow them to go ashore too much at night. I think if you compel a master to take a boy, you must also give him considerable power over him, not to illuse him, but to be stringent with him.

215. Masters, of course, would prefer to have trained boys?—Yes, very much. They want the boys ready to do anything as soon as they are shipped.

216. Then the experience they acquired on training vessels would be appreciated?—Very much. I would prefer a trained boy three to one against an untrained lad.

217. *The Chairman.*] Suppose a lad left a training vessel at sixteen or seventeen after a couple of years' training, would he not practically be an ordinary seaman?—Yes. Of course there is a good deal of difference in boys. You would want to leave small and weakly boys a year longer on the training ship than you would the strong ones.

218. I think we are hardly in a position to get training vessels of large size, where we could keep boys separate and teach them trades, and, at the same time, practical seamanship. Suppose we had one large vessel in some port, and sent all boys of one class to that? You might keep one class of boys on one deck and another on the other. There are hundreds of large ships disused at Home that you could get for the purpose and it would be very easy to keep them separate.

219. *Mr Peacock.*] Do you not think that keeping the boys in distinct classes would cause unpleasantness?—I do not think so. I do not say it would be right to keep boys altogether in the lower class. You might put a criminal boy for a year or so in his own class, and when you thought fit you might put him among the good conduct boys, with the understanding that if he did not behave well he would be sent back to his old quarters and punished. But I would have the power of flogging small boys. They do not care for confinement, it is no punishment to many young scamps, but if they got a light whipping it would cure them altogether.

220. *Mr Daniel.*] The boys are kept separate on the merchant vessels. Apprentice boys there do not quarter with the crew, though they work with them?—Yes; those boys are kept in separate quarters from the crew. Of course they pull and haul with the sailors, but then they have no time for talking, and as soon as the work is over they separate immediately. It is not when working together that boys learn harm, it is when they mix with sailors in the fore-castle.