

99. Supposing there were a vessel of sixteen- or eighteen- knots speed, would it be safe to drive her in the face—I will not say of the worst south-easter, but of a pretty strong one, between here and Lyttelton?—You could not drive a boat of the size of the “Takapuna” as compared to the way you could drive a larger vessel. A big ship will not feel the weather so much as a small one, which is lower in the water. A vessel running at a good rate of speed would require a whale-back deck on her forward, as they do at Home. All the fast boats there have them now, and so have the Atlantic liners.

100. You stated your opinion that the “Mararoa” probably cost £120,000. Has not the cost per ton of building all classes of steamers gone down very much?—Yes; you could probably build a steamer for £15,000 or £20,000 less now.

101. Of course, it is not fair to expect exact knowledge from yourself as to the cost of steamers, but would you be surprised to learn that a vessel like the “Moana,” with a speed of eighteen knots, is obtainable for £130,000?—No; I know the price has gone down very much of late years.

102. Taking the average weather that we have here, and say a boat with some reserve power could run the distance in ten hours, how often would you expect the weather to stop her from keeping time-table speed?—Well, I do not think on an average that more than twice a month there would be any material delay.

103. That is taking one day with another?—Yes; about twice a month.

104. I suppose you could not give us any idea of the profit and loss on a 2,000-ton boat, running the distance in ten hours, at present passenger rates, with the number of passengers now travelling between the two places?—There is no guarantee as to the number of passengers. There are many passengers who would not go by her. There are a great number of people who do not care to go extra quick. I have seen the “Takapuna” running a quick service between Wellington and Onehunga, and the Union Company charged £1 a head extra for saloon passengers and 10s. a head for steerage passengers going by her, and I have seen the “Penguin” and the “Wanaka” running in the same service, and the “Penguin” was always full, although she went round by Nelson, when there could not be more than half a dozen in the saloon of the “Takapuna.” I suppose it was the extra £1 a head which kept them away.

105. *Mr. Duthie.*] You mentioned that the “Mararoa” was a sixteen-knot boat; does she still keep up that speed?—Yes, with the help of the donkey-boilers.

106. What is her time between Wellington and Lyttelton on an average?—I once came in her in eleven hours and fifteen minutes from wharf to wharf.

107. But that was exceptional?—Yes.

108. You have been asked with regard to a boat of sixteen knots. My impression is that the most we can get is a steamer to do the passage in twelve hours. To insure the passage being made in that time what class of boat would be required?—You could get a small boat to go the speed, but you want to carry the people.

109. If there were six steamers a week there would not be so many passengers by each of them; for a twelve-hour service what sized vessel would you have?—I am still in favour of the size I have mentioned—from 1,700 tons to 2,000 tons. The “Manapouri” and the late “Wairarapa” were about 1,700 tons gross. They would be nice suitable vessels, provided they had the necessary speed.

110. This would be a special service with very little cargo, and the great bulk of the 'tween-decks could be used for passenger-accommodation. You would have far more passenger accommodation than would be practically required. I want to know what would be a fair-sized boat to do the service in twelve hours, with very little cargo, and having to carry ballast?—A 1,700-ton boat would do for that. People do not care to go in small boats; they prefer the larger.

111. A boat some 20 ft. longer than the “Takapuna” could be got at Home now for £50,000 or £60,000; could not a boat of that size or a little larger do the service in twelve hours?—Yes.

112. And the cost would be about £60,000?—Yes.

113. And under the conditions I have mentioned, with no cargo, there would be ample berthing-accommodation for passengers?—Yes; about two hundred.

114. *Mr. Joyce.*] Have you been in the service between England and America?—No; but I have seen the ships repeatedly, and I know pretty well all that is going on from magazines and engineering works.

115. You know these vessels have very heavy weather to encounter?—Yes.

116. And they have to keep up their speed in all weathers?—Yes; but look at the size of the vessels. They are increasing every year until we shall have them all “Great Easterns” yet.

117. Is that one reason why you go for a large ship?—Yes; the larger the ship the more certain is the service to be carried out.

118. How many years have you been captain on the coast of New Zealand?—Sixteen years. During all that time I have been running round the coast.

119. Then, to insure a ten- or twelve-hours service you would require a boat of a certain size and speed?—Yes.

120. What is the distance from Wellington to Lyttelton?—175 to 180 miles.

121. Nautical miles?—Yes.

122. Have sixteen knots been got out of the “Takapuna”?—Fifteen knots were got out of her in Wellington Harbour when Mr. James Mills gave an outing to members of Parliament.

123. If she were 20 ft. longer she would be faster?—Yes.

124. And the “Mararoa”?—She is a fifteen-knot boat now. You could get sixteen knots out of her, if required, on a short run.

125. Do you think that in the service which we contemplate boats should have twin-screws?—Yes; all ships in future in such a service will have twin-screws.