

Then Captain Jones sat for the examination on the 13th and 19th July, and I think it will be made apparent to your Honours that very grave irregularities occurred in the examination-room, and that, as a matter of fact, there was no examination at all. However, it will be needless for me to dilate very much on that subject, because the evidence is very simple. There is a good deal of documentary evidence, and it will not be a very difficult matter for your Honours to arrive at a conclusion on that particular point. Notwithstanding these irregularities, Captain Jones was passed by the examiners, and a certificate issued to him until it was cancelled by the Supreme Court in April of this year. I understand it will be said by Mr. Glasgow that, on the 9th or 10th July, 1897—that was, two days after the envelope is said to have been written by the Minister of Marine—he (Mr. Glasgow) took the envelope to Mr. Hall-Jones, the Minister, and showed to him. Mr. Hall-Jones, I understand, will deny that that was so. However, on that point also, there is a great deal of documentary evidence, and it will throw sufficient light on the subject to enable your Honours to form a conclusion on that point. These seem to be the facts relating to the examination of James Jones; but it will be necessary for me to go back a little in order to show what the Government did in connection with it. After the rising of the House in November, 1898, the Government received certain information from Mr. Allport, Chief Clerk, and then applied to Captain Allman for a report, which he furnished, and it explained the position in detail. Upon this information the Government suspended Captain Allman and Captain Edwin, who were both examiners, and then, after consulting the officers of the Crown, they proceeded against Captain Allman and Captain Von Schoen for procuring the certificate by false representations.

*Judge Ward:* How does Captain Von Schoen appear in it?

*Mr. Hanlon:* He is a tutor here, and there will be a good deal of evidence which will show the connection that Captain Von Schoen had with the matter. He was a coach and tutor, and it appears that he knew a great deal more about the information in the department than he should have known. These two were proceeded against in the Supreme Court, but the case fell through on a technical ground. Captain Allman after that was dismissed. There will also appear, during the progress of this inquiry, that there were irregularities in connection with two others—Captains Bendall and McLellan—in reference to the issue of licenses as adjusters of compasses. It will appear that irregularities were disclosed by Captain Von Schoen to the Chief Clerk of the Marine Department.

*Judge Ward:* When?

*Mr. Hanlon:* I cannot give you the date of them, but I think it was in February of 1898.

*Dr. Findlay:* Can you indicate who were concerned in those irregularities you last mentioned?

*Mr. Hanlon:* No, I do not propose to indicate who are connected with them. That will come out in due course. I mention these at this stage because, as the certificates of these two captains are in question, it is advisable it should be known at once, so that they may get notice if they wish to be represented. I do not know that it is necessary to open any other matter, because there are many things that will be inquired into; but they, no doubt, will develop as the evidence proceeds. That is all I propose to say by way of opening. I will now call the Right Hon. the Premier.

*The Right Hon. the Premier:* Might I be permitted, by courtesy, to make a short statement? I have obeyed the subpoena issued by your Honours. It is my intention to give evidence and to assist you as far as lies in my power. When a previous Commission was sitting, which had no connection whatever with this, on constitutional grounds I declined to tender evidence; but the circumstances are very different in this case. First, there are no charges in this case. Secondly, having had a great deal to do with the administration and the legislation in connection with this department, and the officers of the department being also involved, I considered that, under the circumstances, I ought, in justice to the Commission, to tender evidence. Not only that, but it is the wish also of my colleagues that I should do so.

RICHARD JOHN SEDDON, sworn and examined.

1. *Mr. Hanlon.*] You are Premier of the colony?—Yes, I hold that position.

2. You know Captain James Jones, of the "Duco"?—Yes, I do.

3. Do you know that he applied for any certificate under the Shipping and Seamen's Act?—Some time—a considerable time—before I left for the Mother-country I had occasion to go into the matter of an application which had been made by him for a service certificate. I think the application, as far as my recollection serves me, had been made in 1895, and I think it was in 1896 that I was dealing with it. There had been an application filed giving the periods of service, making over three years. The department had sent a reply in the negative. This was taken exception to, and as it came before me there was nothing to show on the papers the ground of the refusal. As far as I recollect, I think I had a conversation with Mr. Glasgow, the Secretary, and he then told me that there was a doubt—in fact, they were pretty well satisfied—that the services contained in that written statement had not been rendered—that is, the time. I then took a course which I conceived to be in the interest of the department and the Government, and if I had the file I would show you that. [File produced.] I have here the file with an application. There is an application made, signed James Jones, 15th May, 1895, and at the head of it is "Application for certificate of service." There is a statement with this, signed J. H. Williams, owner steamships "Duco" and "Mana." On this there are services shown of time amounting in the aggregate to three years five months and nine days. The next paper to it on the file is a copy of the original signed by Mr. Williams, and it is certified as being a copy of the original by George Allport, 6/6/95. On this copy there are red-ink marks, showing no record against some. Some are marked with Jones's name inserted after the name of the boat. In respect of some of the times, the figures of the original are deleted, and red figures are inserted.