

399. Is that in addition to their food?—Yes; and they are only asked to work when the engines are going. They are not grafting all the time.

400. *Mr. Duncan.*] About the "Toroa"—what carried away and disabled the machinery?—The reversing-gear for going astern. It did not carry away for going ahead.

401. What is it made of?—Cast steel; the centre and outer planet and small pinions of gun-metal.

402. Were you satisfied that they made a good job of the repairs?—Yes, except that they were not accurately cut.

403. There is no machinery for cutting teeth, as far as I know, in Wellington?—I think not. I wired all over the colony to get it, and I have had to cable to America.

404. Did you not apply to the Marine Department for leave to go out as a sailing vessel, because the reversing-gear was not quite finished and you wanted to get away?—No, we claimed to have the ship cleared because we were not dependent on the engines for motive-power, but there was an objection lodged.

405. Was the application granted?—I do not know. We waited from Saturday to the Tuesday, and were going from one to the other in the department. The ultimate result was that we had a letter sent on board to proceed to sea.

406. *Mr. Duncan.*] Was not the machinery under repair up to the night of your going to sea?—Absolutely not. The machinery was repaired, and we were there three days trying to get her to work.

407. Have you not told us already that you did not think she had been properly repaired?—I do not think so. Mr. McGregor will confirm me in the fact that the marine engineer in charge answered in reply to him that the engines were as perfect as the day they were made.

408. Have you not told us already this morning that you were conversant with the working of oil-engines?

409. And you also told the Committee that when you went back to Wanganui you would try them?—Yes.

410. Why did you not try them before?—When I attempted to, the engineer threw down the tools. I knew what touchy men they are in these matters, and I walked on deck.

411. Where is the engineer of the "Thistle"?—I suppose he is in charge at Wanganui.

*Mr. Duncan:* I may say I was at Westport and went on board this vessel. I never saw her before. I had a talk with the engineer and said, "Just start these engines," and he started them in a jiffy. He started the winch, and did it splendidly. Yet this witness says he was discharged because he was incompetent.—I did not say so.

412. *The Chairman.*] Give us the reason why he has been discharged.—I do not know the reason. I understand they, the freezing company, are reducing the staff, and do not intend to send him to sea. For all the work required they can put the second engineer of the works in charge.

413. *Mr. McLean.*] I understood you to say he was not competent at the start?—That is what I said.

414. *Mr. Hall-Jones.*] They are simply going to use the boat for carrying off frozen mutton, and so on?—Yes.

415. *Mr. Houston.*] When this engineer on the "Toroa" was at Kaipara, did Mr. Lane send his son over?—Yes.

416. Was Mr. Lane's son a certificated engineer?—No; not that I know of.

417. Was he able to work her when he got on board?—Yes.

418. Then the certificated engineer could not work the engines?—No.

419. And you have discharged him?—Yes.

420. Why?—What was the use of keeping the man when he broke the engines and could not work them?

421. You consider that although he was a certificated engineer he was incapable of driving an oil-engine?—Well, he proved so twice.

422. *Mr. Carson.*] I suppose that because the department compels you to carry a certificated engineer you are stopped altogether?—Yes; we lose her services.

423. If you could get a practical man, you would get one immediately?—All we want is a man competent to drive the engines, and if the department can put a man there I am willing to pay full wages; but I do object to carry a man who breaks our machinery and jeopardises our property.

*Mr. Duncan:* The cause was the breaking of the tooth. If a tooth breaks it is like a wheel in a clock—the clock breaks down thoroughly. These teeth cannot be made in New Zealand. It was not because the man on board was incompetent.—There was no flaw visible in the breakage; it was through unskilful manipulation.

424. *The Chairman* (to Mr. Henderson).] Do you concur in what Mr. Duncan says about these teeth?—Mr. Duncan says they cannot be got in the colony, but cast teeth can, and will do the work practically as well if machine cut, although the reversing-gear may be broken down, it makes no difference to the engine driving ahead. She can use her propeller.

425. *Mr. Duncan* (to witness).] Why not get a qualified man in the vessel to run her now?—Because the certificated men available have proved incompetent. I was asked two or three points about the engine. There are two or three things the same in the Hercules engine as in the Union engines, but there are conditions that do not apply. As regards the question as to why we do not take the present engineer from the "Thistle," the point is this: The "Toroa" has to make her own compression; in the "Thistle" they have self-starters.

426. And, therefore, that engineer is not competent?—I do not say that, but I should certainly want some proof of his experience. The vessel is more powerful, and she is a self-starter.