

91. Do you think a man from the plough could make a pin in three days?—If used to it he could.

92. Do you think a man, having a permit for working an engine for sixteen days in one year, could tell if his propeller was loose in the shaft?—Yes.

93. Could you tell?—Yes.

94. How?—By the vessel not going ahead.

95. Could any of your men test the efficiency of an engine and say whether it was doing good or bad work?—Yes, at once.

96. How would they do so?—I could not tell you.

97. *Mr. Houston.*] From your evidence Mr. Duncan has shown that a man would only have sixteen days' experience in a year in driving an oil-engine on your vessel?—Yes.

98. Would he not be on board from the beginning to the end of the year?—Yes.

99. And be called upon at a moment's notice to work the engine?—Yes.

100. Would you not expect him to be ready at a moment's notice?—Yes.

101. In reality, his only having a practical experience of sixteen days in the year would not render him unqualified to take charge of the engine?—Not at any moment.

102. How does he fill in the balance of his time?—He was an able seaman on board.

103. *The Chairman.*] So that when not driving the engine he would be taking his watch?—Yes, the same as the others.

104. *Mr. Houston.*] You consider that the motive-power on all these vessels is the sail?—Yes, except in river work and in going to and from the wharves. Outside that you cannot depend upon the engine. But if the sails should be blown away, with a little judgment you can get into a port and get assistance. If the engine breaks down the vessel is a sailer.

105. Do you think the protection of life and property is as great as on a steamer?—Yes, if properly equipped. You never hear of a sailing-vessel with auxiliary oil-engine going ashore through the breaking down of her machinery.

106. With regard to the oil-tank, where was the tank placed on board the "Medora"?—In the engine-room, right alongside the engine. That is the main or only thing that we all object to. We want to have that tank out of the engine-room, because if there is any danger at all it can only come from the tank. We wish to have the oil-tank to be placed away from the engine altogether, but the regulations will not allow it to be done.

107. Where do you think is the safest place to have it?—Anywhere aft or out of the engine-room. Then there is no danger of explosion, even if the tank does leak.

108. *The Chairman.*] Have you been on board the "Huia"?—Not since the engines have been at work.

109. *Mr. Houston.*] You consider there is no danger of explosion in the engine of one of these vessels?—No, it is impossible if the oil-tank is out of the engine-room.

110. I would like you to give us your experience, as master of a vessel, of the certificated engineers you have been obliged to carry?—When these regulations first came out in January last, we had to take marine engineers. I took one to start with, but at the same time I had to have my brothers there to work the engine. He was with us about two months.

111. What did you ask the engineer to do?—He told us he could not work the engine; but we had to carry him, and my brothers had to work the engine in place of him.

112. Where did you sail from?—Awanui and way ports.

113. For how long would that be?—About six weeks.

114. While on board did he do anything in the way of driving the engine?—He tried to.

115. He could not drive it?—No, without being shown. When the engine was started, he could sit down below.

116. *Mr. Crowther.*] Did he do any other work on deck?—No.

117. *The Chairman.*] What did you give him per month?—£10.

118. Then you discharged him and got another engineer?—Yes.

119. How long was he on board?—About two months.

120. How much did he get a month?—The same amount.

121. What work did he do in connection with the engine?—Nothing. He was shown how to start it and managed to do so, and was left in charge; but by some mistake he let the water off, and the cylinder got red-hot and some part of the engine was cracked, and we had to send to America for the duplicate part. When he got to Auckland he left without any orders. Then we had a third engineer.

122. How long was the third engineer on board?—He was on the "Torora" for about two months or a little over. The two engineers I have spoken of were on board with my brothers. The third could not work the engine.

123. How much did he get a month?—£10.

124. What did he do?—Walked the deck. He said he never had so much reading in his life before. Just before coming down I sent down to the department for a permit, but the answer came too late, so I got a first-class engineer—a man fifty-six years of age; but he came to me and said, "I am a first-class English certificated engineer, but I cannot drive your oil-engine. I have got to learn yet."

125. *Mr. Duncan.*] What is his name?—The names of all of them are at the Customs.

126. *The Chairman.*] Whom did you employ then?—My brother had to go away as skipper, and had to start the engine himself, and then the engine went wrong. The first-class engineer was supposed to drive it.

127. The skipper went down to start her?—Yes. There were two engineers on board—a first- and third-class engineer. They have cost us enough and have done no work.