

318. You know Mr. Wade?—Yes, he has been working in different positions on steamers for the last twenty years.

319. Do you remember introducing Mr. Wade to me in Auckland some little time ago?—I cannot say I do.

320. Do you remember him coming down to Auckland and complaining very bitterly about having been obliged to take his engine out?—Yes.

321. I think it was at your request that I communicated to the department on the matter?—I cannot remember that for certain. I know there are a great many complaints, and I know he came to Auckland and complained very bitterly.

322. Are you interested in the manufacture of oil-engines?—Yes, with the Monitor Company.

323. Is your company at work now?—They are not engaged manufacturing in New Zealand, but they are making them in America. The agents here are simply indent agents—they do not stock here.

324. Will your company construct or simply put them up here?—They may construct later on. They have altered and improved their patent.

325. You do not think from your experience that it is absolutely necessary to have a certificated engineer on these boats?—If the instructions are read over carefully, an average person of common sense can manage the engine.

326. *Mr. Symes.*] I understood you to say that the settlers had suffered very severely?—Yes, Lake Whangape is a stormy lake, and it is very severe work to bring goods over.

327. What did the settlers do before the advent of the oil-engine?—They used open boats.

328. Would it decrease the cost of freight if you had oil-engines—I myself have paid £1 10s. a ton for bringing goods out, and now it is under 10s., delivered at the railway-station. With my own launch I could bring it out for very much less.

329. Do you know anything about gas-engines?—Yes; we also use a stationary engine for gas.

330. If working in town would you be compelled to have a certificated engineer to drive them?—No, and our engine is simply a marine gas-engine.

331. You would not require a certificated engineer for it if it were stationary?—No.

LUDOVIC BLACKWOOD, examined.

332. *The Chairman.*] You are a Government Inspector of Machinery?—Yes.

333. How long have you been in the service as such?—I have been in the service sixteen years altogether; as Inspector, a little over fourteen years.

334. Have you been engaged in such duties in different parts of the colony?—Yes.

335. What have been your duties?—Inspector of Machinery and Engineer's Surveyor.

336. What machinery do you inspect?—All land machinery.

337. Gas-engines?—I have inspected a lot of gas-engines; saw-mill machinery, steam-boilers, engines, and oil-engines.

338. Marine engines on board ships?—Yes.

339. You say you have examined oil-engines. Where?—In the Auckland District principally.

340. What vessels have you inspected where there were oil-engines on board?—I have inspected the "Huia," "Aotea," "Waiapu," "Brothers," "Torea," "Sunbeam," "Mona," "Beryl," and several others.

341. Starting with the "Huia," have you inspected her more than once?—Twice.

342. When did you make your first inspection?—When she was ready for survey. That would be in about 1897.

343. Where were her oil-tanks?—On deck, I think. On the first of the oil-ships they were on deck, or right forward. Some people advocate them being put right forward, and the department think they should be right above the engine.

344. In the case of the "Hercules" they were above the engine?—Yes.

345. Are the tanks down below in some of the vessels?—Not now. They are all above the engines in the home-trade vessels.

346. You say that in all the home-trade vessels the tanks are on deck?—Yes. I have not surveyed the "Medora."

347. In the vessels you have surveyed are the oil-tanks on deck or above the engines?—In the engine-room.

348. Which is the best place?—Above the engine, so that the oil can gravitate down into the machinery.

349. Is there any danger to life or to the vessel while the tanks are in the engine-room?—I do not think so. I have seen no danger from it.

350. Do you know the construction of the oil-engine?—Yes.

351. And therefore every part of it?—Yes.

352. Can you start any oil-engine that you have inspected?—Yes, I think I could.

353. Have you any doubt about it?—I think it is a very easy matter; just about as easy as swallowing a glass of good whisky, or falling off a log.

354. Have you been consulted by the owners of any of these ships about the incompetency of marine engineers to start these engines?—No; not on one occasion.

355. Not on any occasion?—No. Captain McKenzie was in charge of the "Huia," and he told me he was perfectly satisfied with the third-class certificated man he had. This man had never been at sea, but he held a third-class certificate.

356. When did he tell you that?—About six months ago. He put up a room in the vessel so as to retain this man. He did not wish to lose him, so he gave him a room of his own, as he wanted to keep him if possible.