

23. Where there are only a few little boats and few or no passengers should not an exception be made?—It should be left to the authorities to arrange for in places like Wanganui. The trouble is that when a man is exempt from carrying a master or an engineer he gets a boat, and is not particular whether she is a sea-going boat or not, and there is nothing to prevent him carrying passengers.

24. Do you not think it would be possible for the Harbour Board to give licenses so as to meet those particular cases—such as pleasure launches, and whether it would be expedient to stop these launches running because in other cases it might be necessary that masters should be appointed?—I think that in all vessels plying for hire they should be compelled to carry masters.

25. *Mr. R. Thompson.*] When you speak of vessels carrying passengers do you mean that that should apply to a boat capable of carrying fifteen or twenty passengers?—Yes, to any boat.

26. Have you any reason to state to the Committee why a man, holding a master's certificate would be any better or more capable to manage a small boat of that kind than a man who has spent the best part of his life as a boatman and knows every nook and corner of the harbour, but who simply because he has not been to sea, is not considered competent?—He wants twelve months' experience on a vessel before applying for his certificate and then he is qualified. It is not necessary to go to sea to do harbour-work. If he has had twelve months' experience on a harbour boat that qualifies him if he can prove to the examiners that he is a fit and proper person to take charge of a boat.

27. *Mr. Millar.*] What constitutes the safety of passengers under the master of a boat: is it not a complete knowledge of the rule of the road?—Certainly.

28. Would not the knowledge of a certificated master make him observe the rule of the road, and is there not a greater liability of a collision taking place where there is an uncertificated man on the same water?—Yes.

29. The risk to those in the boat managed by an experienced man is equally great, and both are jeopardized?—Yes.

30. It is absolutely essential that men passing an examination should have a knowledge of the rule of the road?—Yes.

31. *Mr. Hutcheson.*] Do you believe that the State has a right to interfere and satisfy itself as to the competency of any man who is intrusted in any capacity with the lives of other men?—I certainly do.

32. *The Chairman.*] Have you anything further to lay before the Committee?—I should like to say something with regard to the various petitioners. The owners suffer from unfair competition. They have provided certificated masters, and carry engineers and life-saving apparatus, and are subject to annual inspections, and in some cases to half-yearly inspections, at an annual cost of £2 10s. for small vessels and £5 for large ones. And that is not the only expense. The examiners are very strict nowadays, and the vessels have to go on the slip, and the engines are pulled all to pieces, the shaft hauled in and out, and a thorough inspection given. If you are a small owner, as I am, with only one boat, you have to hire another boat while your own is undergoing an inspection, so that you can consider that the examination fees and expenses of a small boat will run into £35 or £40. Contrast that with an oil-launch, the owner of which is under no examination up to a certain tonnage. He can build any kind of boat and knock it together with wire nails. A boat that would be licensed to carry six if run by steam—this is an actual fact which occurred on the Waitemata River on Coronation Day—if run by oil may carry twenty-two passengers for hire.

33. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] What is the name of that boat?—I do not think she has a name. She is owned by a settler up the river.

34. Where does she ply?—The owner uses her for his own accommodation.

35. Where was she carrying passengers from?—From Riverhead to Auckland. When the Customs authorities sought to interfere they found they had no authority. With regard to master mariners, if these launches are allowed to run without certificates these men are debarred from getting work at their own profession and have to go into the ranks of the unemployed. Now with regard to the engineers. They say that these oil-engines are an American production.

36. *The Chairman.*] Not all of them?—Most of them. In Auckland most of them have been made by the Union Oil-engine Company of San Francisco, and I believe they are admitted to this country free of duty, and also the oil for their consumption. There seems to be encouragement offered to oust steam-engines of our own manufacture. We have to pay 25 per cent. duty on imported steam-engines. There might be some excuse for this if it were proved that oil was a better power than steam and was likely to render steam obsolete, but I think it has been proved beyond doubt that it is very incomplete and not at all likely to supersede steam at any time. I think if it is necessary for the public safety to have a master in charge of a vessel propelled by steam and going two or three knots an hour it must also be necessary for the public safety to have a master for a vessel if propelled by any other power. In talking to one of the members the other day he suggested that small steam and oil launches should be placed on the same footing; but I think that would be a great mistake in the public interest, because the tendency would be to build boats as cheaply as possible and to overload them, and sooner or later there would be a disaster.

C. CROUCHER, Secretary, New Zealand Mercantile Marine Officers' Association, examined.
(No. 2.)

37. *The Chairman.*] Have you any remarks to offer on the Shipping and Seamen's Bill?—Yes. I did not think I should be called to-day and am not quite prepared. I have left some papers in my office, but have some suggestions I would like to make. I would suggest that the words "one hundred" in subsection (b), section 21, be struck out, and the word "fifty" be substituted therefor; and that the following proviso be added: "That every ship trading between ports more