211. Owing to him probably not having the latest and best apparatus?—Yes. I think he got something of that kind afterwards; but I am speaking of previous to that.

212. *Captain Blackburne.*] We have received a letter from a man in Whangarei in regard to an instrument for testing the inside of the bales. Have you ever heard of anything of the sort?—An inventor came over here with an invention of the sort some years ago, but I do not think it was very desirable; at any rate, it was not adopted.

213. Do you know what kind of instrument it is, and how it gets at the centre of a bale?—Well, it could only be by inserting a thermometer, I think.

214. You could not do that in a dumped bale?—Oh, yes, you can do it, but you are very likely to break the guard in the thermometer.

215. Did you do that in the dumped bales as well as in the hard-pressed bales?—Yes. I broke so many that I got the spikes without the thermometer.

216. How long do you keep the spikes in?—Sometimes if there is any heat in the bale when you drive the spike in and leave it for a few minutes, you will detect it; it will be quite warm when you withdraw it. I used to insert them here and there in a block of wool when I was suspicious of any, and sometimes leave them in all night and withdraw them next morning, and if there was no heat in them I considered they were pretty safe.

217. Did you ever make any recommendation to the shipping people about not stowing the wool or flax in holds that would be hotter than usual—holds that would be next to the stokehold, for instance?—No, I do not know that I have ever made any recommendation of that kind; but if the bulkhead is liable to get hot, surely they would do that for their own sakes. In cargo, according to the regulations, dunnage has to be put in if it is likely to sustain damage through the absence of dunnage.

218. But some holds get very much heated—holds that are practically over the stokeholds?—Yes.

219. I know we have had trouble to know what to put in those places sometimes, and we gathered from information received that there is a greater risk if inflammable cargo is stowed in such places?—Undoubtedly there would be.

220. *The Chairman.*] Would you not be likely to use these reserves for putting the last thing in that came along?—No.

221. Captain Evans and Captain David said they used these spaces particularly for coal?—Yes, I think those spaces are generally utilised for coal. I know that was the case in the "Turakina," which caught fire here.

222. *Mr. Foster.*] Have you ever noticed, Captain Bendall, sufficiently as regards the heating of bales to be able to say whether the heat generates quicker in a dumped bale of wool than in an ordinary pressed bale?—Well, I do not know—I have never noticed that particularly—I have never ascertained, but I should say it would develop sooner in the pressed bale.

223. Can you give any reason why?—Well, I know there are opinions opposite to that, but I should think the compression of the bale would be more likely to create and retain heat than when the fibre was slack in a bale.

224. You think the heat would generate quicker in the dumped bale than in the ordinary pressed bale?—I think so.

225. I suppose, considering the dumped bale, the closer the pressure the more it would prevent the throwing-off of the heat?—Yes, that would be so, I should say.

226. It has been stated in evidence that wool will not burn. Have you had any experience to show that it will burn?—It would not blaze, but it would smoulder.

227. But will it only smoulder?—On that occasion I have told you about where it is mixed with foreign substances it will blaze.

228. You say "mixed with foreign substances": do you mean manure and that sort of thing that sometimes gets in the bale?—Manure and grease—foreign grease, such as tallow mixed with wool.

229. But say wool in its natural condition?—I know it will take fire and smoulder—I have seen it—but I have never seen wool in its natural condition—clean wool—blaze that I am aware of.

230. You referred to the accumulation of animal fat—tallow—in the wool on the "Waimate." That tallow getting into the wool resulted from the fire?—Yes. Then it was put under a process of partial scouring at Napier, but they did not extract the grease from the wool.

231. But in the first instance, the fire which subsequently melted the tallow which ran into the wool, do you know where it originated?—I think it was pretty well proved, as it was proved here, that it was from external application, either wilfully or accidental. I have never known a spontaneous fire on a ship to take place here.

232. *The Chairman.*] But then that caught fire a second time after being scoured: that was not from external application, was it? I think you said when it was opened here again it fired?—Yes, it fired and blazed on the wharf, and they had to apply a hose to put it out.

233. *Captain Blackburne.*] The fire on the "Strathgryffe," which put into Dunedin in 1901, appears to have originated well down in the hold, and was apparently due to spontaneous combustion?—I remember the ship being there. There was another called the "Beltana" that put into Dunedin, bound from Adelaide to London.

234. Was that in the wool?—Yes, I think they considered it was due to the wool. That was some fourteen or fifteen years ago.

235. *Mr. Foster.*] Was she purely a wool-ship?—I do not remember. I dare say she was. She may have had grain. They found her on fire when off the south end of New Zealand or off the Auckland Islands somewhere, and they bore up for Lyttelton.

236. Was an inquiry held here?—There must have been at Lyttelton.