

Copy of judgment of Mr. Justice Bigham, Q.B. Div., Commercial Court, High Court of Justice, *In re Owners of Wool Cargo ex "Waikato" v. the New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited)*, was produced by Captain Arthur Willson McKellar, put in, and marked "Exhibit No. 10."

Copy extract from the log of s.s. "Waikato," voyage 6, Home, 1889, was produced by Captain Arthur Willson McKellar, put in, and marked "Exhibit No. 11."

Copy report of Captain Croucher, master s.s. "Waikato," relative to voyage 6, Home, was produced by Captain Arthur Willson McKellar, put in, and marked "Exhibit No. 12."

Copy of the evidence of Professor Vivian B. Lewes *in re* Exhibit No. 10 was produced by Captain Arthur Willson McKellar, put in, and marked "Exhibit No. 13."

The Commission adjourned till to-morrow, Thursday, 23rd August, 1906, at 10.30 a.m.

WELLINGTON, THURSDAY, 23RD AUGUST, 1906.

The Commission sat in the Upper Court, Magistrate's Courthouse, Wellington, at 10.30 a.m.

ALFRED HENRY MILES sworn and examined. (No. 23.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your full name?—Alfred Henry Miles.

2. What are you?—I am resident partner in the firm of Murray, Roberts, and Co.

3. The Commission understands that you can give us some information concerning the subject-matter before the Commission?—I shall be very pleased to answer any questions. Perhaps if I gave you one or two points it might enable you to put your questions in whichever direction you considered suitable. Briefly, during the many years I have been engaged in this trade I have seen many bales of wool withheld from shipment owing to same being in a damp and more or less heated condition. We have had sheep-skins put out of the "Arawa"—sheep-skins which we were shipping on behalf of a client, and which we were not able to examine—it is difficult for a shipper to examine every bale that goes through his hands—we had a number of bales put on shore in a heated state. They were placed in the Harbour Board shed; I was called by the captain and superintendent of the line to explain how we were shipping stuff in such a condition, and you could scarcely put your hand on the bales in parts. We promptly sent for the shipper, but he could say nothing except that the skins were shipped in a damp condition without his knowledge by his men and without proper supervision; but when the bales were opened on the wharf steam was emitted, and you could not put your hand on them in parts. I have had cases of greasy locks and pieces in which I consider there is very great danger, because these pieces and locks are largely mixed up with manure, which always contains a certain amount of moisture. I remember one particular instance of a couple of bales of pieces that came down from the coast and got heated in course of shipment in the surf-boats, and was so warm at all events that the Harbour Board people stopped shipping, and sent them to my store to be dealt with. They arrived at my store too late to be dealt with and sent to the fellmongers, which is the usual course adopted by shippers, and so they were put into my store. I went in with one of my men that evening, being anxious about the bales of warm wool. We went on to the top floor, and directly we got there we smelt ammonia, and we got a lantern and there was a slight mist over these bales from evaporation. We opened the bales up, and away went the fumes of ammonia which had been generated in these bales. I say "ammonia" because it smelt like ammonia. Well, it occurred to me very often in thinking over this question in which we are all so largely interested, that if that danger could happen from salt water being on these bales coming down the coast, the same thing might happen on board ship. The bales might be shipped in a perfectly dry condition here, and owing to a leakage in the ship, or sweat, or anything of that sort, the same thing may be developed in the chamber of a vessel even after the vessel had left port with the wool in a dry condition. I mention that point, gentlemen, because I would suggest it is worth while bringing it out from your nautical men—men like Captain Bendall and Captain Blackburne, who may be able to give you a lead in the matter. I have never during all my experience of handling wool seen wool alight, and I do not believe a bale of wool will light. If you had some samples of wool here and tried to burn them you could not do so, but if you mixed a little hemp with it away would go the whole thing.

4. The wool as well?—The wool and hemp goes together. I have tried that quite recently to show people when discussing it.

5. *Mr. Foster.*] Would you say that, supposing wool will spontaneously heat to a certain temperature, it will not then flame?—I say I have never seen it.

6. You said you do not think it would flame?—I do not think it would—at all events, greasy wool would not.

7. *Captain Blackburne.*] There is a good deal of evidence to show that wool will blaze when coming in contact with the air after it has very much heated—almost to incandescence?—I should not like to say it would not, but all I can say is that I have never seen it, and I do not think that greasy wool would flame. Of course, you have to put one man's opinion against another, and I suppose you will take the opinions of scientific experts as to whether it will.

8. *Mr. Foster.*] It could be easily demonstrated?—Very easily. It has always been a very-much-debated question in London among underwriters as to whether there is the danger of wool actually fring, but that it will fire if in contact with other articles, such as vegetable-fibre and hemp, goes without saying.