

1879, in compliance with instructions contained in Memorandum No. 49, dated 27th January, 1879, from the Under Secretary for Immigration.

Present: Dr. Rouse, Dr. Macdonald, Mr. Superintendent Broham, Mr. J. E. March. Mr. George Harper appeared on behalf of the New Zealand Shipping Company. The Chairman of Directors, the General Manager of the Company, and Captain Boyd were also present.

Dr. Rouse presided, and Mr. Superintendent Broham conducted the inquiry.

Mr. Harper desired to say, on behalf of the Company, that an investigation had already taken place at Pernambuco, lasting four days, and the whole of the evidence had been transmitted to the Board of Trade. The Company, however, had no desire to raise any objection to the present inquiry, on the contrary, they were anxious that the fullest investigation should take place.

Daniel Loons, the engineer, was called, and the following evidence was then taken:—

Cornelius Mulcahy said: I am an immigrant by the ship "Piako." I know the engineer. All I can say is, that about a week preceding the fire I was called by the engineer into the fore-hold to assist him to get some oil; while there I saw him take a naked light from the lantern, but not in such a way as to ignite anything, and hold it in his hand over the oil cases; it was about two yards forward from the hatchway. The light was a candle, and I saw him put it back into the lamp. I can say that it was in no condition to set fire to anything. I am certain no fire could have proceeded from the light: it was a close lantern. The engineer took the candle out of the lantern as the light was not good enough in the lantern. I cannot say that he ever did so before, nor have I heard any person on board say so. The engineer was in the store-room, and not in the hold. The engineer poured out the oil from the drum into a can; he afterwards took it up with him on deck. I am not aware where the fire broke out. While the engineer was pouring out the oil the candle was in the lantern.

The Court then proceeded to the fore-peak of the ship—the store-room for oils, paints, &c., and the witness pointed out the exact spot where the engineer was standing when he went with him with the lantern. After which, Captain Boyd pointed out the spot where the fire originated, which was a distance of fully sixty feet from the store-room.

In reply to a question, Captain Boyd said: No spirits of any kind are allowed forward. The despatching officer at Plymouth was very particular in this respect.

All the immigrants were then mustered aft, and Dr. Rouse addressed them, stating that, in consequence of reports having reached the Government that some of the immigrants could give them information respecting the fire, an inquiry had been instituted, and he now desired any one who could throw light on the matter to come forward and say what he knew.

No one came forward, all remarking that they could not give any information on the subject.

The Court unanimously concluded that there was no evidence to show how the fire originated.

JOHN T. ROUSE, Chairman.

H. MACDONALD, M.D., Immigration Commissioner, Lyttelton.

T. BROHAM, Superintendent, A.C.

J. E. MARCH.

#### Enclosure 5 in No. 34.

The UNDER SECRETARY for IMMIGRATION to Captain BOYD.

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 25th March, 1879.

It affords me much pleasure to convey to you, by direction of the Hon. the Minister for Immigration, the special thanks of the Government of this colony for the very valuable services rendered by you to the immigrants by the ship "Piako," which put into Pernambuco on fire whilst on her voyage to Lyttelton.

I am further desired to state that you will be paid double the gratuity ordinarily allowed, and the Immigration Officer at Christchurch has accordingly been directed to pay you an additional £25.

I have, &c.,

H. J. H. ELIOTT,

Under Secretary for Immigration.

Captain Boyd, ship "Piako," Lyttelton.

#### Enclosure 6 in No. 34.

The UNDER SECRETARY for IMMIGRATION to Dr. GREEN.

SIR,—

Immigration Office, Wellington, 25th March, 1879.

It affords me much pleasure to convey to you, by direction of the Hon. the Minister for Immigration, the special thanks of the Government of this colony for the very valuable services rendered by you to the immigrants by the ship "Piako," which put into Pernambuco on fire, whilst on her voyage to Lyttelton.

I am further desired to state that you will be paid double the gratuity ordinarily allowed, and the Immigration Officer at Christchurch has accordingly been directed to pay you an additional £50.

I have, &c.,

H. J. H. ELIOTT,

Under Secretary for Immigration.

Dr. T. B. Green, Surgeon-superintendent ship "Piako," Lyttelton.