

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19TH, (Mr SHEEHAN, Chairman.)

Mr. LEVIN, M.H.R., examined.

Mr. Levin.

19th July, 1882.

1. *The Chairman.*] You know, Mr. Levin, what the Committee is meeting for?—Yes.
2. You are a merchant living in Wellington, and have something to do with shipping?—Yes.
3. Can you tell the Committee whether or not there would be an opening on board vessels sailing from Wellington for lads brought up in training schools?—If I understand you to mean for lads untainted with crime, I should say, certainly, yes.
4. Can you give the Committee any idea of the number that might be absorbed in the course of twelve months?—I have no reliable information, but I may say I have had a very considerable number of applications from lads. You would obtain much more reliable information on the matter from Captain Williams. He has mentioned to me that he was constantly being applied to.
5. What is the number of lads usually carried by those ships?—I should think from four to six.
6. Do you think it would be desirable, in dealing with this question of naval training vessels, to prevent the sending to ships of lads who had been convicted of crime?—I should say, in the first instance, that it would be undesirable to mix lads who were untainted with crime with those who were. If the proposed scheme is carried out, there should be two training ships, and certain of the lads, after they had served their time in the one, could be drafted into the other, but it would be a bad thing to mix the two in the first instance.
7. What is the best plan? That of having one large vessel, or two or three smaller ones?—My impression is, that you have to look upon these training ships in a great degree in the direction of schools. The boys get a theoretical knowledge of seamanship, and a practical knowledge of certain matters which should fit them for the position of ordinary seamen.
8. Looking at our own colony, do you think it would be desirable that these lads should be taught actual seamanship?—My impression is, that actual seamanship would, to a great extent, be learned on board the vessel in harbour.
9. If there were three vessels employed for various purposes, could they not be largely used for light-houses?—No, it would be disadvantageous to use sailing vessels for such a purpose.
10. You speak of a large vessel being employed for the purpose. Now, in the case of Auckland where the school buildings were, they have trained the children on board a vessel so as to have actual experience of the working of a vessel?—I am only giving my own opinion. My impression is, that continual living on board a ship is one of the most essential points of training, and the best that a boy could get.
11. Have you any idea what wages the lads get?—I cannot tell what wages they get as lads. When they become men, they might get the wages of ordinary seamen.
12. *Mr. Hurst.*] What are the wages of ordinary seamen?—I think they are £4 per month.
13. Are you acquainted with the details of the working of these vessels, and whether they are a success or otherwise?—They are a success; ship-owners are only too glad to get these boys.
14. *Mr. Dick.*] You speak of two classes of boys. Could you draw the line in any way. Would you include neglected children, or would you separate them?—Yes; most certainly.
15. Would you consider, for instance, such children as attended the Industrial School, and who had committed a little theft, criminals, and would captains of vessels refuse them?—I do not think a captain would refuse any of that character.
16. Then what class of boys would you have for the second training ship?—My impression is, that there are very many parents of children who would be glad to pay the cost of their children on board the training ship, and I fancy there are very many parents who would be glad enough to have their sons educated, and to pay for that purpose.
17. *Mr. Dick.*] Have you any idea of the cost of such a vessel? How many would you put on board a hulk?—It depends on the size of the hulk.
18. *The Chairman.*] Do you think it would be an advisable thing to provide by law that all vessels sailing out of any port in the colony, and over a certain tonnage, should be obliged to carry a certain number of apprentices?—I should like more time to answer that question.
19. Do you think it would be an inducement to lads if we were to make special provision for giving them the franchise and the freedom of the city, and the right to vote for members of Parliament?—I shall think over both questions.

THURSDAY, 20TH JULY, 1882. (Mr. J. SHEEHAN, Chairman.)

Mr. J. L. COSTER examined.

Mr. J. L. Coster.

20th July, 1882.

20. *The Chairman* having read the order of reference to the witness, said :—One of the objects of our inquiry is to ascertain whether we should have separate vessels in different harbours moving about under sail, or one large vessel moored in a central harbour and not moving about. We also want to know how far you think the shipping of the colony will be able to absorb these lads coming from the Naval Training Schools, and whether you think it will be desirable to make it compulsory on vessels over a certain tonnage leaving the colony to take a certain number of apprentices. You are, I believe, Mr. Coster, a Director of the New Zealand Shipping Company?—I am Chairman and Managing Director.
21. How many vessels are there in connection with the Company?—There are seventeen vessels owned by ourselves. They average over one thousand tons each.
22. *Mr. Macandrew.*] Has the Company any vessels under charter?—We charter, upon an average,
I. 9.—1.