

question which afterwards turned out to have been erroneously framed by the Examiner, Captain Edwin. We were informed in evidence that the intention of the question was to bring out certain cross-bearings, whereas it was so constructed that the answer could only show parallel lines. Upon this mistake being discovered the candidate obtained his certificate. It would probably be going too far to draw from a single instance of this sort any inference disparaging to the competency of Captain Edwin as an Examiner, and from any other point of view this case seems to offer nothing calling for remark.

We have now to give an answer, so far as we have been able to get information on the subject, to the question contained under the fourth heading in our Commission: "At whose instance or suggestion, and under what circumstances, the provisions of the Shipping and Seamen's Acts relating to the adjustment of compasses and the employment of apprentices or boys came to be initiated." So far as the evidence before us goes, it appears that the legislation now in force relating to the adjustment of compasses, and contained in section 4 of "The Shipping and Seamen's Act Amendment Act, 1895," or, at all events, the framing of regulations for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of that section, was suggested by a question asked in Parliament on the 26th July, 1895, by Mr. Pirani, M.H.R., as to the intention of the Government to appoint persons to act as adjusters of compasses. Regulations for that purpose were framed in February, 1896. They were similar to the regulations in force in the Colony of Victoria, and were drawn up by Captain Allman, after consultation with the officers of the Marine Department, information having first been obtained from the chief Australian Colonies. These regulations were altered early in July, 1897, in consequence of the strong remonstrances of the captains of British ships, who regarded it as a grievance that they should be obliged, before sailing from Wellington, to have their ships swung and compasses adjusted by an officer appointed by the New Zealand Government for that purpose. The alteration in the regulations was made for the purpose of meeting their views, at all events, so far as to allow them to select their own adjusters. Upon the subject of "the employment of apprentices or boys," we find no direct legislation except in section 7 of "The Shipping and Seamen's Act Amendment Act, 1894," which provides that two apprentices may be carried in the place of one ordinary seaman. But, according to the evidence before us, the other provisions of the same section, together with the First Schedule to the Act, specifying the minimum number of men to be employed on different descriptions of vessels, have exercised a decided indirect influence in reducing to a very small figure the number of apprentices now to be found in the colonial marine service. On the other hand, it is a question how far this result has, under any circumstances, become inevitable owing to the increasing substitution of steamers for sailing vessels. But the answer to the question with which we are now dealing is, that the legislation in question was initiated, and the schedule drafted, by Mr. Millar, M.H.R. Some interesting views upon this question, regarded as involving considerations of policy, will be found on the various pages of the printed evidence noted in the margin.

Evidence, pages 25
58, and 150.

Evidence, pages 27
210, 216, and 218.

Prior to formulating our report on the application of James Jones for a certificate of service as home-trade master, on his examination for the certificate of competency which he obtained, we deem it necessary to give an outline of the procedure adopted at the hearing of this case. Mr. Hanlon appeared, instructed, he stated, by the Government, to assist the Commissioners by calling as witnesses all persons in any way concerned in the matter, but specially disclaimed appearing for any particular Minister. He obtained from us certain subpoenas, and called the following witnesses: The Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, the Hon. W. Hall-Jones, Mr. W. T. Glasgow, Mr. George Allport, Captain Allman, Captain Edwin, Captain Von Schoen, James Jones, Mr. A. R. Hislop, Mr. A. G. Johnson, Mr. R. E. Bannister, Dr. Fitchett, Mr. Hugh Gully, Mr. E. Horneman, Samuel Burgess, Mr. John Hutcheson, Mr. J. A. Millar, M.H.R., Mr. John Alfred Plimmer, Mr. Harold Beauchamp, Sir Arthur Douglas, Mr. R. Thompson, M.H.R., and Thomas Redmond.