

172. How would it come down?—In scows, or something else.

173. Are you not aware that Lane and Brown cut their own timber?—I am not aware of it. They find it cheaper, I suppose.

174. Are you aware that Lane and Brown have built a number of vessels fitted up with oil-engines?—Yes.

175. Are you aware that they have had to refuse orders for vessels on account of the restrictions put on by the Government in regard to oil-engines?—I could not say. I know nothing about that. They may.

176. Do you not think it would be an injustice to a firm of that kind, who employ so many hands?—If trade demands a commodity nothing in the world will stop it.

177. Do you mean to say that restrictions placed on the production of gum or anything else would not affect the output?—A skilled man would get £12 a month and an ordinary driver £6 a month. Do you mean to say that £72 a year would harm a vessel? The difference in pay given to an engineer and to a driver would not increase the pay one penny on freight carried in vessels carrying 100 tons employed in the Auckland-Wanganui trade.

178. It would have an effect upon it?—Very small.

179. It is a fact that a great number of orders placed with Messrs. Lane and Brown, of Auckland, have had to be withdrawn?—The number of steam-vessels built in Auckland are almost as numerous as those with oil-machinery, so that trade has been busy all round; and last year machinery for shore and marine purposes was very much increased.

180. There has never been anything like it for some three years?—No.

181. *The Chairman.*] You have been ten years in the Government service?—Yes.

182. *Mr. Houston.*] Do you think none of that prosperity can be attributed to the oil-engines enabling vessels to go into places where they had never been before?—I cannot tell that, but I think it is a mistake to put all the trade down to that.

183. Do you not think it would injure the settlers to restrict the use of these oil-engines when the rates of freight can be brought down to a reasonable sum by their use?—Take the rate to Mangonui: what difference would it make to the tonnage if the cost to the vessel was increased by £72 a year?

184. You do not seem to realise the difference between the motor power of sails and steam. In a vessel driven by steam I admit it would not make a great difference, but in a vessel whose motor power is entirely sails it must make a great difference. The "Medora" used to go up a winding river perhaps thirty or forty miles, so that her sails were of no use to her whatever. The result now is that she can go into the river, her sails are pulled down, and the oil-engine is made use of to take her up to the wharf. That is the advantage the owners give to the settlers in enabling them to have their freights carried at a very much lower price than before. They can go from Auckland to Awanui, going up the river in about three hours with the tide.—That may be so.

185. *Mr. Carson.*] Are you entirely prejudiced against the oil-engines?—Not at all.

186. The tenor of your report was entirely against them, and showed that they should not be introduced because they were against the interest of labour?—Shipbuilding has increased since these came into force. The petition says that the shipbuilding industry was never so busy as it is now, and I simply drew a comparison to show that shipbuilding in steam-vessels was equally busy as shipbuilding for auxiliary power, the number built out of the colony, and the number built in the colony and surveyed by us. I merely wanted to give the facts from our own books.

187. I gathered from your report that oil-engines were not introduced because they were imported from America?—Not at all.

188. And I understand you made no reference to those built in the colony?—I only got word about the factory from Mr. Henderson last week.

189. I suppose it has nothing to do with you if people like to introduce oil-engines?—No, I never interfered with the trade.

190. Is a certificated engineer who has never seen an oil-engine competent to drive one?—The Board of Trade allows a man to go aboard a ship as an engineer who has been employed at works of a similar nature, although he may never have seen a steam-engine built; and I say that if such a body as the English Board of Trade would allow that, surely a mechanical engineer is a proper person to take charge of these engines.

191. Then your argument is, that a mechanical engineer can take charge of an oil-engine although he has not seen it before?—Certainly.

192. Is it not a fact that a person may be asked to take charge without knowing anything about it, and do nothing?—No; the law demands it.

193. And then they keep another man to look after the engine?—No, they do not require to do so.

194. I mean that under the present arrangement they have to employ two men instead of one?—No; the law only compels them to employ an engineer.

195. The law would not compel them to employ two men?—No, that is their own look-out. They are not compelled to employ two.

196. Is it not a fact that some of these engines have been taken charge of satisfactorily by persons who have only been trained on launches?—It is just like a woman taking charge of a sewing-machine in the country. She gets the threads in and works the machine, but something goes wrong and she has to go to a doctor—a mechanical engineer. There is a difference between driving and taking charge of an engine. On a steam-ship the best driver of a winch is the winchman; but when it comes to a point and it jibs and won't work, he has to go for the engineer. Give me a winchman for driving a winch-engine, but if in an isolated position you will never make a man a mechanical man by examination. A driver is not an engineer—that is the point. A man