

and, at the last moment, Donald and Edenborough took this man. The man I selected went to Kaipara and took charge of the vessel. Then I wired to Mr. Lane, and, as a result, he sent his son down from Whangaroa to show the certificated engineer (Lisle) how to start the engines.

369. Was it a condition-precedent to his taking charge that some one should tell him how to work the engine?—Yes. He said, "I must have my full £14 a month, because I am a Union man"; and, as a contra, he agreed to take this man Spry for a month.

370. The Auckland firm wanted to take Spry down to the Island?—Yes.

371. And you went to Lane and told him the difficulty, and he sent his son down?—Yes, and he was a week with him.

372. After that, did the vessel leave Kaipara?—Yes.

373. Where was she bound for from Kaipara?—Wellington.

374. Do you know how long she was on the passage?—About four days.

375. Did she arrive in Wellington?—Yes.

376. Where did you go from here?—To Greymouth.

377. With the same engineer on board?—Yes. When he came here the engine was broken down. He did not wire me, but I found the engine was broken down. He had broken the reversing-gear in trying to reverse her. I maintain he broke the engine from inexperience.

378. Did you question the engineer yourself?—Yes.

379. What did you ask him?—I asked him how he did it, and he said he did not know.

380. Who repaired it?—It was repaired at Luke's foundry.

381. How long was it away?—About three weeks, but he could not work her then. I instructed him to warm up the engine, and he could only get the engine to work but once in three days at the wharf. Mr. McGregor went on board to see if the engine would work, and put the question to the engineer, "Are these engines perfect?" and he replied, "Yes, as perfect as when it was made, as far as I know," and Mr. McGregor said, "Why can't you start them?" and he said, "I do not know." He thought the parts made by Luke's people were not made accurately, but they were made as well as they could make them here with the appliances they had. He suggested to me and the captain that the ship should proceed to sea as a sailer, and be put before the wind to drag the propeller, and the propeller would drive the engine, and so assist him to start her by making her own compressions. When they went to sea they put the ship before the wind for three hours, but he could not start the engine then. Then she arrived at Greymouth, and the boat was off Greymouth with her engines not having been used since leaving Wellington. He said she had broken down, which was an untruth. I got a wire to that effect, but the engines were as when she left here. She was towed into Greymouth.

383. Did you go to Greymouth?—No.

384. What happened there?—I wired down and discharged the engineer. She is running to-day with her engines useless for the want of a driver.

385. The engines have not been used since?—No. She is lying at Wanganui to-day because there is not an engineer to drive the engines procurable.

386. Have you at any time got what the department call incompetent competent to see if the engines will go?—Yes.

387. And will they go?—Yes.

388. You say you know all about its construction: have you tried it yourself?—No, but when I go back I will.

389. She went to Kaipara?—Yes.

390. Was she sailed from Greymouth to Wanganui?—Yes, under sail, but she was towed into Wanganui.

391. Was she towed out of Wanganui?—No, she is lying in Wanganui now.

392. Have these engines been used at sea since they were put on board here after the repairs, and, if so, were they driven by some person whom the department would call an incompetent man?—No.

393. Is it not possible that there might be something wrong in the parts through them being put together in an improper way?—I am prepared to challenge any one on that point. This man could not start them.

394. Could not Mr. Duncan start them?—I do not think so. It may seem absurd that marine engineers fail to work oil-engines, but there are many adjustments in the working of oil-engines, and the atmosphere has to be taken into consideration as to the proportion of hot and cold air. As a matter of fact, different engines have a different proportion of air, and the makers of the engine do not put on a gauge as regards the adjustments.

395. You say that Mr. Duncan could not work it?—I do not think so.

396. Could Mr. Henderson?—I do not know, but it sounds as if he could. In each case where vessels have got into a disaster, they have been in charge of a certificated marine engineer. I think there is no doubt that, if they were to make themselves acquainted with the oil-engines they would naturally command employment by the owners, but they seem to enter upon the position with a prejudice on oil-engines. Two of the members of the Institute have told me that they would not take charge of oil-engines without further experience, and that the position has brought contempt on them as members. The manipulation of an oil-engine is totally different from that of steam.

397. Are there any other points you wish to refer to?—With regard to the present position, the secretary of the Marine Institute informed me that he had a hand in drafting the conditions, and we have to thank him for having to employ certificated men. A man should be qualified if he is competent without being twelve months in charge of oil-engines.

398. You do not know how many permits have been issued to men to drive?—I cannot say. We have advertised and offered tempting wages, but it is not enough for your marine engineer. Men get £10 a month, and I have offered £15.