

incompetent to start and stop the engines, so a man said this morning. I understand that this man served in Her Majesty's navy, and retired on his pension. If he served in Her Majesty's navy for twenty years I do not think he was incompetent.

384. You said that gas- and steam-engines are twins?—I said that gas and steam were twin sisters.

385. And there is as much danger with one as with the other?—Yes.

386. And yet the one can be worked on shore, and a man and his premises may be blown up, but at sea you will not let them be blown up?—No. He gets drowned as well as blown up.

387. We have heard that fishermen are permitted to work these oil-engines themselves?—Yes.

388. Do you not think a fisherman's life is just as valuable as another man's life?—Yes.

389. Does it not strike you as peculiar that two, three, four, or six fishermen can go out and run the risk of being blown up, but directly they get a ton of flour on board there is danger?—Yes; but I do not think that affects the case at all.

390. You have inspected the oil-engines on these boats?—I have inspected about a dozen and a half.

391. Have you inspected the "Oban"?—No.

392. She went on the bar at Waitara?—Yes.

393. Have you ever heard the reason?—No; but her oil-tank is forward, and that might have caused her to strike on the bar.

394. Why would that cause her to strike on the bar?—Because the supply of oil in the pipe is very small, and the gravitation would be interfered with when she was not down at the stern. Another thing is that if she shipped water she might take it into her cylinders, and that would stop her.

395. Do you think that having a marine engineer on board would prevent any of those things occurring?—I think so. A practical man—I would not say a marine engineer—would find out defects quicker than any novice would.

396. You do not know whether there was a marine engineer on board?—No, I have no idea, I know the "Oban" was laid up, and had very little success. She was practically useless, and they were going to take out her engines. The Mokau Coal Company chartered the vessel. The engines were sealed up and they could not use her.

397. She had, as a matter of fact, at the time she got wrecked, a marine engineer on board?—Yes, that may be.

398. *Mr. Lawry.*] Do the Committee understand you to say that the position of a vessel under certain circumstances would prevent the oil flowing by gravitation—by depression in the bow?—Yes.

399. Would it not be possible to place the tanks somewhere where that would not occur?—They could utilise the mast for a tank.

400. Do you think there is any danger of combustion or explosion by the tank being placed in close proximity to the engine?—No, I do not think so.

401. Do you think that under all the circumstances the best place for the tank is in the engine-room?—Yes; immediately above the engine. I have found out since that the "Oban" was in the sea-way, with her bow dipping and ascending, and therefore could not get a regular supply of oil.

402. Have you heard of any case where an explosion has taken place?—I heard of one in Sydney, but not in New Zealand.

403. I understood you to tell the Committee that there was just as much danger of explosion whether it was a steam- or oil-engine that was used?—Yes, with the engine.

404. Do you think that with ordinary care there is very little danger of explosion in either case?—Very little.

405. Have you during your experience as an Inspector heard any complaints from owners of steamers propelled by oil-engines as an auxiliary power as to the incompetence of men they have employed who were not marine engineers?—No, I have heard no complaints about them.

406. Officially have you heard any complaints through the compulsory employment of men who were certificated engineers?—Yes.

407. How do you account for the satisfaction in the one case and dissatisfaction in the other?—I cannot account for it, because all the people I have come in contact with seemed to be perfectly satisfied and made no complaints.

408. Will you explain to the Committee the reason why an engineer refuses to drive an oil-engine when he is on board?—I cannot explain that.

409. Have you any evidence to support the statement that a certificated engineer would refuse to learn how to drive an oil-engine?—No.

410. Have you any knowledge as to whether the marine engineers as a whole are hostile to the proposal to have experienced men to drive oil-engines who are not certificated marine engineers?—I do not think they have any hostile feeling towards it.

411. Have you heard of a deputation which waited upon the Minister of Marine in Auckland, protesting on behalf of the marine engineers, against the employment of non-certificated men?—I remember that.

412. Would you not suppose they were hostile to the employment of non-certificated men, when they formed that deputation?—They must have been, or they would not have done so.

413. You take that as *prima facie* evidence that they were?—Yes.

414. Are you aware that on the same day there was a large deputation of men interested in oil-engines as an auxiliary power which waited on the Minister and asked that men who were not marine engineers be allowed to drive these engines, subject to examination?—Yes.