

mariner or master stevedore to have the right during working-hours to go on board any vessel while she is loading or discharging to inspect the cargo and stowage on behalf of the consignees and shippers.

My committee recognises the grievance which has occasioned the letter referred to, and numerous complaints from merchants, and, while not feeling competent to dictate as to what course should be adopted, pass on the suggestions made for your consideration. It was also suggested at the meeting that if the Collector of Customs is at any time not satisfied that the agents of vessels are responsible people, or, if there should be no legal agents, the captain or owners should be required to lodge a deposit or bond with the Customs Department, to be held for a stipulated time after the vessel has left, and to be used in meeting properly established claims. I may add that merchants here find no difficulty in getting reasonable claims recognised by the principal lines having established agents; but their difficulty is with the vessels making occasional visits here and not so represented. It is to meet such cases that my committee trusts you will make some provisions in the legislation of the present session.

I have &c.,

PETER BARR, Secretary.

The Hon. W. Hall-Jones, Minister of Marine, Wellington.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 11th August, 1902.

I have the honour, by direction of the Minister of Marine, to forward herewith for the Committee on the Shipping and Seamen Bill copy of a letter which has been received from Mr. James Park, of Hokitika, on the subject of an oil-engine scow which is being built for trade on the west coast of the South Island.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE ALLPORT,

For Secretary.

The Clerk, Shipping and Seamen Bill Committee,
House of Representatives, Wellington.

SIR,—

Hamilton Street, Hokitika, N.Z., 18th July, 1902.

A company has built a scow here for the river work between Westport and Jackson's Bay. As a sailing-boat the scow does not need to carry a master, because it is under 20 tons (in reality about 16 tons) register. We find that if we put oil-engines into the scow we will not only have to carry an oil-engine engineer, but also a master. Now, it is an anomaly that if we put the oil-engines into the scow, and thus make it far safer and more easily worked, we are compelled by law to carry a master, and if we do not put the oil-engines in we do not need to.

The scow will be of immense benefit to the settlers on the river, as we will be able to supply them with carriage at one-sixth of the present dray cost. In addition to that it will lighten the cost of road-maintenance to a very great degree. I have therefore to ask that you will be good enough to amend section 7 of "The Shipping and Seamen's Act Amendment Act, 1896," so as only to apply to oil-vessels of over 20 tons net register; or gazette the district from Westport to Jackson's Bay as within restricted limits. The small boat built especially for plying into our southern rivers, where no boat ever enters, will not pay to carry a master. Plenty of good seamen who know our coast, and are well up in river work, are to be found who would work the scow and develop a good trade. I may say that the scow is to be used a great deal for fishing.

I am addressing this letter to you, as down here we look to you as in the place of our member, who is away at present.

Trusting to receive a favourable reply,

I am, &c.,

JAMES PARK.

The Hon. Sir J. G. Ward, Acting-Premier, Wellington.

STATEMENT showing the Number and Net Tonnage of Sailing and Steam Vessels on the Register in the United Kingdom, for the Years 1897 to 1901 inclusive.

Year.	Sailing-vessels.		Steam-vessels.	
	Vessels.	Net Tonnage.	Vessels.	Net Tonnage.
1897	11,669	2,566,392	8,559	6,358,147
1898	11,341	2,366,539	8,806	6,608,561
1899	10,945	2,225,532	8,997	6,912,417
1900	10,573	2,077,655	9,178	7,202,509
1901	10,382	1,970,927	9,452	7,612,507

GEORGE ALLPORT,

For Secretary.

Marine Department, Wellington, 9th September, 1902.