

QUESTION NO. 2. —*All matters connected with the departure of the steamship "Talune" from the port of Auckland on or about the 30th day of October, 1918, her voyage to the said islands and her arrival there, in respect of the bearing of those matters on the introduction of the said epidemic.*

On the arrival of the "Talune" from the islands on or about the 21st day of October, 1918, she was berthed at the Auckland wharf alongside or near the "Niagara." She discharged her cargo and proceeded to Lyttelton on the 22nd October, 1918.

On her voyage there, while there, and on her return to Auckland, influenza of an apparently mild character was prevalent on board. She loaded and took on passengers at Auckland for the islands. Before sailing it was found that two of the crew were unwell. A doctor was sent for, who diagnosed the cases as simple influenza. These men were sent ashore, and two others were substituted in their places.

The "Talune" left Auckland on the 30th October, 1918, with a clean bill of health, and arrived at Suva on the 4th November, 1918. The passengers and crew were medically examined there, and as a consequence of that examination the ship was placed in quarantine alongside the wharf, but was permitted to unload her cargo with Fijian labour.

Captain Mawson in his evidence makes the following statement: "At Suva I was inspected by the Port Health Officer, and had cases of illness on board which I surmised to be influenza, and this was subsequently confirmed by the Port Health Officer. I signed the usual report that the ship was clear of infectious diseases, as I did not know that influenza was then an infectious disease. The local passengers landed at Suva, and the ship worked in quarantine. This decision was come to by the Chief Health Officer after consulting with the boarding officer and myself as to the conditions in New Zealand on departure."

The custom at Suva in connection with the "Talune" is that the Union Steamship Company employs about ninety Natives to discharge and load cargo at that port, and these same Natives proceed on board the ship on the round trip, discharging and loading cargo at the various ports of call, returning to Suva in the course of twelve days, more or less, where they are landed. This course was followed in the voyage under review.

The "Talune" left Suva on the 5th November, and arrived at Levuka the following morning, where she was again quarantined. She left Levuka the same evening for Apia, arriving there on the morning of the 7th November, 1918 (Samoan time). The anchor was dropped at 9.35 a.m.

At least six of the passengers had influenza on arrival at Apia, certain members of the crew were unwell, and a number of the Fijian labourers were "sick." Three of the passengers were seriously affected. Certain of the passengers considered it doubtful if they would be allowed to land without first spending some time in quarantine.

We find that no entry was made in the official log of the "Talune" on her voyage to Apia of any sickness on board as required by section 4, subsection (5), of the Statutory provisions relating to official logs.

The Port Health Officer, Captain Atkinson, arrived on board shortly after the ship was anchored, and an examination of passengers and crew was made in the manner customary there—that is, each person passed in review before the Medical Officer while his or her name was checked off the list.

The evidence shows that the second officer was ill in bed, and went back to bed after examination, while three of the passengers were manifestly unwell. Captain Atkinson advised one of the passengers, Mrs. Churchward's maid, to go home, promising to visit her later in the day, which promise he carried out. She died the following day. The stewardess also informed Mrs. Churchward that her maid was dangerously unwell, and should receive immediate medical attention on shore.

Another passenger, the Rev. Mr. Cane, after visiting the Bank of New Zealand and calling on a trader on urgent business, went straight to the hospital in a high state of fever and was seriously ill there. He ultimately recovered and rendered good service in ministering to the sick both in Upolu and Savaii.

Another passenger, Mr. John Ah Sue, died two days after leaving the ship.

Captain Atkinson states that, in reply to a question regarding the health of passengers and crew, Captain Mawson, captain of the ship, informed him that