

372. Have you known him by sight for some time?—Yes, for some years.

373. When did you know him to speak to?—I have only spoken to him on one occasion.

374. Did you know anything about him as far as his abilities are concerned?—I always heard that he was a good river-master, quite capable of handling a boat.

375. Did you know he was capable of writing?—I did not know. I understand that his literary acquirements were limited.

376. When did you first hear that he wanted to get a master's certificate of service?—The first I heard was in connection with the service certificate.

377. When did you first hear of that?—It was before Mr. Seddon went to England—I think that was in 1897—I do not remember what month exactly. I reported in the memorandum which has been read. I think Mr. Seddon saw him about it a day or two before he went away and asked me about it, and I told him that the Collector had reported against the issue of a service certificate, that the report of the service was not sufficient. But this written request from the Premier that I would report on the document was sent to me, and I reported accordingly.

378. And your report was against the issue of a certificate?—Yes.

379. Did you get that back again from Mr. Seddon with a memorandum that you were to reply to that effect?—No, I do not remember getting it back.

380. I think there was a note put on it by Mr. Seddon "Reply accordingly"?—I daresay if it was there I might have sent the letter, telling the Collector to inform Mr. Jones.

381. Well, what was the next you heard of it?—I do not remember hearing anything more about that matter at all. I think the next occasion on which the Jones matter came up, as far as I was concerned, was Mr. Hutcheson's speech. I did not take Mr. Pirani's speech to refer to Jones, nor did I take Mr. Hutcheson's speech to refer to him.

382. What was done by the department in consequence of either the speech of Mr. Pirani or Mr. Hutcheson?—As far as I was concerned, the first step that I took was, after the House rose, to bring Mr. Hutcheson's speech to the Minister for Marine. That was, I think, on the 21st November, after he returned from the South.

383. But did the Minister for Marine, after delivery of either one of these speeches, speak to you?—Yes. I could not give him any information on the subject.

384. You did not know who was referred to?—No.

385. Was Captain Allman sent for on that occasion?—Yes; I think I was asked to hasten Allman's return to Wellington. He was inspecting lighthouses, and was at New Plymouth in the "Tutanekai." I told him, I think, to come down by rail, and he was here on the night Mr. Hutcheson spoke.

386. When Captain Allman returned, did you have any conversation with him?—Yes.

387. Where and when?—I think it was in the House. I think on that night he said there was nothing in the statements that were made. I may say, really, that I had no conversation with him on the subject; he volunteered the remark that "there was nothing true in the statements made by Mr. Hutcheson."

388. Well, was it after the speech?—Yes; the same night. I was not there until five in the morning, but I was there pretty late.

389. Captain Allman told you there was nothing in it?—Yes.

390. Was the name of any particular person suggested by you or Captain Allman?—No; I have no recollection of any name being mentioned.

391. Did you see Captain Allman and the Minister for Marine together?—No, I do not think I did.

392. You left Captain Allman?—I understand that Captain Allman saw the Premier and the Minister for Marine, but I was not present.

393. Will you tell us when the matter was next brought under your notice?—I do not think I was concerned in the matter until the 21st November, when I brought Mr. Hutcheson's speech under the notice of the Minister, and stated I thought something ought to be done in connection with it.

394. Where did this conversation take place?—In Mr. Hall-Jones's office in the Government Buildings.

395. Was that all you told him?—Yes; I said that I thought we ought to take steps to find out all about the allegations made by Mr. Hutcheson.

396. Had you any other information at this time?—Oh yes, I had, from Mr. Allport. After Mr. Hutcheson's speech I spoke to Mr. Allport, and that was what led to my putting the matter before the Minister.

397. First of all, when did Mr. Allport make the disclosures to you?—I think it was about the middle of November.

398. Was it after the House rose?—Yes.

399. We have been told that it was a couple of days before or a couple of days after the 9th November?—Well, I think it was a couple of days after. At all events, it was after Mr. Hall-Jones went South; I had to wait until his return.

400. Mr. Hall-Jones said he went South on the 11th; so it must be some day subsequent to that?—I may have been unable to do anything before his departure. Generally I used to see Mr. Hall-Jones on matters in the forenoon.

401. Well, what did Mr. Allport tell you?—He told me that Mr. Von Schoen had told him some time ago about the way in which the Jones examination had been conducted. He told me that it had been made in confidence.

402. What did Mr. Allport tell you? Give us the conversation if you can?—He showed me the papers, and we looked at the examination-papers together, and Mr. Allport said that, with reference to not only the Jones papers but those of Bendall and McLellan, he had reason to believe,