

415. Have you any recollection of the reply of the Minister?—No, I saw the account of a deputation waiting on the Minister in the newspapers. I think Mr. Lawry introduced both deputations.

416. You do not remember that the Minister, by inference, at any rate, promised the later deputation that he would endeavour to frame a regulation, or enactment, if necessary, to give effect to their demand—that was, to have men driving these oil-engines who had subjected themselves to examination and proved their qualification?—Yes. I thought it was *vice versa*; that the deputation of the shipowners was first, and that of the engineers came last. All my replies on this matter refer to what I saw in the newspapers.

417. *The Chairman.*] There is nothing official?—No.

418. *Mr. Lawry.*] As a departmental officer you would have no official objection to any regulation or enactment which would provide for the employment of uncertificated marine engineers if they possessed the necessary qualification for driving these oil-engines?—Not the least.

419. *Mr. McKenzie.*] There is a piston to these oil-engines?—Yes.

420. Is there a block on it?—The piston is usually called a “piston-block.”

421. I suppose there are rings?—Yes.

422. Do you suppose a man not used to the work, and had to file it down, would be likely to fit a ring on as well as a practical mechanic?—No, he could not do it; he would not know how to start.

423. We were told this morning that a girl nine years of age could start and work one of these engines. Do you think so?—Yes.

424. Do you think such a young lady could, if shown how, be able to start or stop the “Gothic”?—Yes, if the engineer in charge opened out the valves, she could do it. It would be easier than an oil-engine.

425. Do you think the risk would be about equal?—Yes; there would be no risk to life and property in stopping and starting an engine.

426. We were told she went out in one of these launches?—Yes.

427. Suppose she went out in the “Gothic”?—I would not like to let her take charge of the “Gothic.”

428. But you say she could start the “Gothic”?—I have not the slightest doubt that a seven- or nine-year-old girl could start the “Gothic,” or any Atlantic liner.

429. Do you think it would be better to have a person with practical knowledge?—It would be much better for the owners. These oil-machines are all new, and only came into use a few years ago. They will naturally decay and go to pieces, and the owners will have to employ a doctor. It would be in the interests of the owners to have practical men.

430. Say there is a grade provided for this class of work, do you think it is necessary that the time served should be the same as for marine-engines and boilers?—Not necessarily. Less practical experience with the tools would do, I dare say.

431. Can you give the Committee what you consider to be a reasonable mechanical qualification for a man to drive?—Perhaps two and a half or three years' apprenticeship. A clever lad would, if he had any taste at all for the work, make a very good mechanic in that time.

432. And you are of opinion that there is just as much risk with these oil-engines as with steam-engines?—Yes; if they break down there is the same danger to life and limb.

433. Is there any pressure in an oil-engine?—Yes, practically the same as steam. The firing point of oil is 266, and in steam 160 pressure is just about the same.

434. *Mr. Houston.*] You said that one of these certificated engineers had been on board of one of these vessels and did no work, and you said he did not want to: will you explain?—You cannot make a horse drink if you take him to the water.

435. Was it on account of his not having the necessary qualification?—I do not know.

436. Do not you think he was disgracing his profession if he went on board and took the owner's money without doing anything for it?—Yes; I think it was very low down. If a man does not do something equivalent to his wages, he is no good at all. I do not know the man, and do not know the circumstances.

437. Are you aware that the owner of an auxiliary oil-engine advertised for a certificated engineer?—Yes, I believe he did.

438. And got several applications?—I am not aware of that.

439. Are you aware that several certificated engineers went on board and were unable to start the engine?—I am not aware of it.

440. Are you aware that an advertisement was put into an Auckland newspaper offering the sum of £10 to any certificated engineer who would come and start one of these engines?—I think it was £15. I read the challenge.

441. Are you aware whether any engineers answered that challenge?—I do not know. I do not know that I was in Auckland at the time.

442. *Mr. McKenzie.*] If you had accepted the offer, could you have started it?—Yes.

443. *Mr. Houston.*] You are not aware whether the challenge was accepted or not?—I have no idea.

444. Do you think that if capable, they would have done it?—I think I would. I would have scooped up that £15.

445. Do you consider it would have been derogatory to the profession for any certificated engineer to take up that challenge?—I do not see that it would.

446. *The Chairman.*] At any rate, you would have done it?—Yes, and considered I would have earned the money very very easily.

447. Would you have known, from your professional standing in Auckland, whether that challenge was accepted or not?—No, I would have nothing to do with it; I would take no notice of it.