

70. Where there are indications of slight heat in a bale, what does your storeman do confirming the impression that it is hot—does he do anything further?—I fancy that there is nothing done.

71. And if it was only very slightly above the temperature of air, would he dump it and ship it?—Unless it was recognised—that is, if he and the other men felt that it was hot.

72. No matter how slight the difference in temperature might be?—Well, as a rule, it is not gone into that carefully. If they came across a bale and it felt hot to their hands it would be put on one side; but if it was almost common heat I presume nothing would be done.

73. So that it would be possible for your storeman to detect a bale of wool just slightly above normal temperature?—I dare say.

74. And still pass it?—Yes, and still pass it.

75. And it would be possible for that bale to be just commencing to set up the heat?—It might be so.

76. And it might be possible that that bale might turn out to be very dangerous?—It might be so.

77. *Captain Blackburne.*] Who is directly responsible for the stowage?—I would feel called upon to be responsible.

78. Would you yourself have the general supervision of the stowage on the ships?—I have men under me of good experience, men who know exactly what is required.

79. Have the stevedores got a free hand, or is it left to the officers of the ships?—I might say that the officers are there to detect anything. Supposing anything was wrong with a bale of wool the officers are in the hold to detect it, and not to allow it to be stowed away; but, of course, naturally my foreman knows better in regard to how to stow wool or cargo than a great many officers do.

80. Are general instructions given to the officers about stowing cargoes alongside one another?—Yes, they have their written instructions in regard to stowing the cargo.

81. I suppose if you only had a limited amount of wool, and your lower main hold was only three parts full, you would not hesitate to fill that up with flax on top of it?—Oh, no.

82. You would not think there was any special danger?—Oh, no, as long as it was well protected from the flax.

83. *The Chairman.*] Protecting the wool from the flax or the flax from the wool?—Either.

84. You say that wool will not spontaneously combust?—Not clean greasy wool, but we carry other wool that I have not dealt with.

85. *Captain Blackburne.*] Did you hear of the "Beltana" case?—Yes. I was not here at the time. I was in Dunedin at the time of the "Strathgryfe."

86. I think that was clean greasy wool?—Yes; but there may have been some foreign matter in it.

87. If it is damp?—With regard to clean greasy wool, although damp under some conditions, it might take fire, but unless some scientific process tells me so I cannot tell from my own experience.

88. *Mr. Foster.*] Considerable comment has been made as to the practice—I will not say "practice"—but on occasions when cargo-stowers smoke in the holds?—Our instructions are that no smoking is to be allowed, and my foreman has instructions that the man who is caught smoking goes out of the hold immediately.

89. Do you find that difficult of enforcement?—Yes, it is something like the coal-trimmers in coal-boats in that respect.

90. It has been suggested that legislation should be brought to bear upon offenders of that sort. But do you not think it would be possible to provide that before any men go on board a ship they should give up their matches and pipes?—I see no great difficulty in that. It is a little bit humiliating to the men if we told them they were not to have their pipes down the ship, that they should be searched.

91. Not necessarily, probably it might be worked without that; but as to the humiliation, I do not see exactly where that comes in. It would be humiliating that a class of men should be required to be searched, but if the necessity was there I do not see where the humiliation is?—That is the only feeling I have that if a man will give his bond that he will not smoke in a ship and then you enforce it by turning out his pockets, that is the difficulty. Of course, there are black sheep in every flock, but from what I know of the Lyttelton stevedores they are careful; but, of course, there are some black sheep who would break through any law.

92. But protection against the black sheep should not be humiliating to the white sheep in a flock?—No, if they take it that way.

93. But serious accidents have happened from this?—Oh, yes.

94. And in the case of ammunition-factories that is rigidly insisted upon?—And also in the case of coal-pits in the Old Country—they are not supposed to have matches, but they sometimes break the safety-lamps.

95. Is there not a regulation in coal-mines to give up everything?—Yes, there is a strict law, but sometimes they get a little lax, and not long ago I read of them breaking their safety-lamps in order to light their pipes.

96. If it is the opinion of a good many—and I have heard a good many expressions of opinion about it—do you think it is necessary to legislate to make it a punishable offence?—I think it should be so.

97. If that is necessary in the opinion of many, do you not think it would be very much more necessary that owners should be interested in carrying out the rules to protect themselves?—Oh, yes, I think so; but the men understand that no smoking is allowed, but we have not that inspection that every man should be told that he should leave his matches outside or take off his clothing.

98. What I mean is this, that a man who goes on board a ship should be required to leave his