

13. *By Mr. Graham.*—Could you suggest any improvements for landing passengers and goods at any of the ports?—Vessels cannot get further up than the White Bluff in the Manukau. If a jetty of about 500 feet was made at the White Bluff, it would be very convenient for landing passengers and goods; at present there is a great want of some accommodation of that sort. In the event of not being able to procure the necessary accommodation, a landing place at Onehunga would be of great service.

14. Could you state the average number of passengers you carry?—I could not do so without going through all the agents' books; but I think about ten cabin and six steerage passengers would be about the average.

15. What would be the charges for the trip to Otago and back?—£30; £15 there and the same back again.

EXAMINATION OF CAPTAIN DECK.

FRIDAY, 30TH MAY, 1856.

1. You were for some time, I believe, the commander of the Colonial Government brig "Victoria," and sailed in her altogether several years?—I was chief officer four years, and commander five years, of H.M. Colonial brig "Victoria."

2. As this long service on the coast of the Colony must have made you well acquainted with the prevailing character of the weather experienced there, will you state your opinion whether quick passages could be relied upon to be made between Manukau and Otago, and the ports of the intermediate Provinces, by smart sailing schooners?—Quick passages could not be *relied upon* if sailing vessels of any description were employed, unless there were several of them—say two between each Province, one going and one coming; each of these vessels would cost from £800 to £1000 per annum. The coast of New Zealand is a very stormy one; and a vessel sailing from Auckland to Otago, calling at each of the intermediate ports, would have to alter her course to every point of the compass; the longest run she could make on one course not exceeding 300 miles, *i.e.*, from Cape Maria Van Dieman to Cape Egmont. Not the slightest dependence *as to time* could be placed upon them, if they had to start from or come into the Manukau.

3. Are you sufficiently acquainted with the harbour of Manukau to be able to state whether sailing vessels experience any considerable detention in entering and leaving that port?—Vessels are frequently detained at the Manukau for five or six days, in consequence of the prevailing westerly winds on that coast; the "Zingari" was once detained there eight days, in consequence of the heavy sea rolling on the bar.

4. What is the character of the ports of Nelson, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Otago, in respect of facilities of ingress and egress for sailing vessels, in all states of the weather?—The harbour of Nelson can be entered with the flood tide with any wind except a south-easter, or a heavy north-easter, which winds seldom blow there: it is a difficult harbour to get out of, especially in south-west winds, when vessels are frequently detained there three or four days together. Wellington is a very fine harbour when once in it; but one of the most difficult in New Zealand for vessels to get in or out of—the wind always blowing either in or out of the entrance. I have frequently, when in the "Victoria," coming from the northward, been inside the outer rock of Barrett's Reef, but owing to the strong winds have been unable to carry sufficient sail to beat to windward, and have in consequence been driven out to sea for two or three days together; it has on two or three occasions taken me longer to get from Cape Palliser to Wellington, a distance of thirty-eight miles, than it has from Auckland to Cape Palliser, a distance of 400 miles. Vessels cannot beat out of Port Nicholson in strong south-easterly weather, which is prevalent in the winter months. Lyttelton is the easiest port in New Zealand for ingress or egress. Otago is a bar harbour, but the bar seldom breaks; the channel up to the port is very narrow and intricate; vessels can rarely leave on the day appointed; I was detained there in the brig five days, in consequence of adverse winds, the pilot not being able to take the vessel over the bar.

5. What, in your opinion, would be the average time of passage for clipper sailing vessels between all the ports named respectively, including calls at New Plymouth?—Supposing a sailing vessel able to leave Manukau, I should say the average passages would be as follows:—

Manukau to New Plymouth	2 to 3 days.
New Plymouth to Nelson	2 to 5 days.
Nelson to Wellington	3 to 6 days.
Wellington to Lyttelton	2 to 5 days.
Lyttelton to Otago	3 to 4 days.

But it is almost impossible to speak with any degree of accuracy, as the winds are so variable; by referring to the appended scale it will be seen the various passages the "Victoria" made during the seven years, I was in her up to July, 1853; the last two years log book I am unable to refer to, as it is at Nelson. I should say a steamer like the one I have recommended below would make the entire trip, calling at all the ports, including stoppages, in all weathers, in thirty days.

6. Are you practically acquainted with steam vessels; and if so, will you state your opinion of the relative advantage of a powerful steamer and a clipper sailing vessel, as vessels for maintaining a rapid and regular communication between the ports of the various Provinces of the Colony?—I have never served in steamers, but have frequently been in them, both at home and in New Zealand. I have a sufficient knowledge of the marine engines to know if anything is wrong in the working of them.