

inexperience, between the genuine able seaman, and the man who has no right to claim that rating. Piece-work is impossible on board ship; at least on board ships engaged in the foreign trade. On a coasting voyage, as, for example, in the colliers plying between the north-eastern ports and the Thames, the plan of paying by the run was universal, but this arrangement is inapplicable to the Indian or the colonial trade. If, however, payment by results cannot be introduced; it becomes the more essential to encourage merit by a flow of promotion, and by advantages in point of pay. In the numerous ratings in the Royal Navy, we have an example of what may be done in this direction. The regulations of the Navy in this and all other matters are well worthy of study by shipowners. They represent the traditions of an ancient service, and the thoughts of many ingenious and capable officers, whose business it has been to maintain the discipline and to animate the exertions of numerous crews.

There should be a voluntary examination for the rating of A.B. The examination should be practical and interlocutory, similar to that which candidates for admission to the Naval Reserve are required to pass. Shipowners would know that men, who could obtain a certificate of A.B. by examination, were not impostors; and captains ought to be allowed by their owners to give higher wages to certificated men. As soon as it became known that something was to be gained by passing an examination, every seaman would try to pass. It might then be expedient to require that a man should have passed the examination, before he was allowed to ship as an able seaman.

I may mention that several Seamen's Associations have petitioned to Parliament in favour of this proposal. Such a regulation would involve no hardship on the shipowner. He would be left perfectly free in the selection of his crew and could ship as large or as small a proportion of A.B.'s as he thought fit.

Again, an increase of pay should be given for good conduct. This is done by Mr. Balfour and other shipowners of Liverpool, and Mr. Balfour, who was specially sent up to give evidence before the Commission as to the deterioration of seamen, admitted that the complaints, which he poured forth so profusely, did not apply to the men, who sailed in his ships.

Would it not cost less and would not the merchantmen be more efficiently manned, if higher wages were paid, fewer hands employed, and more care taken in the selection of the crew? It is a common practice with shipowners to defer the engagement of the crew, until a day or two before their ships are ready to sail. The captain is then instructed to go down to the shipping office, and in an hour to collect together a crew for a voyage round the world, from among a number of men, whom he has never seen before. In what other trade can a parallel be quoted to this haphazard and perilous system? Would it be reasonable to expect that the skilled labour required for a ship-builder's yard or an engineering works could be obtained at a moment's notice by sending out a foreman into the adjacent highway? In all well-organized industrial establishments it is the custom to keep together a nucleus of workmen; and this is done even in bad times,