

old rule of one apprentice to every four men in a crew, we should require about 50,000 apprentices. This would be in excess, I think, of the numbers we require.¹ Then we may go on to the question,—if we are to train boys, who is to provide and pay for them? That part of the question I know nothing about; the shipowners must settle it, but I think a certain proportion of boys are due by Government, and I will tell you why. Government draws from the mercantile marine a reserve. That reserve is estimated at from 14,000 to 15,000 men. The bulk of those men are able seamen, and, as I have shown you before, it takes 3,000 boys to keep up 10,000 or 11,000 able seamen in the Navy, therefore, I think Government should by right, and might be expected by shipowners, to train at least from 3,000 to 3,500 boys a year, or give their equivalent in money. I have no opinion of your third class reserves, no opinion of your restrictions, and as it were, ticketing the boys. One of the few cases where I differ with Mr. Brassey is in his idea of training. In passing, I ask any practical man, shipowners let them ask their captains,—captains let them give their opinions,—I am sure ninety-nine out of one hundred seamen will agree that you cannot train sailor-boys anywhere except afloat. I have gone into the question and thought it over carefully; and know the advantages you derive on shore, and the time you gain in different ways, but as Mr. Brassey very properly put it, training is artificial, so the nearer you can approach the real thing the better, and the nearest approach to reality is having training ships afloat. What you teach the boy of knotting, splicing, reefing, and steering, are matters of small importance compared to the aptitude gained for sea life. He can take care and provide for himself; he knows which way to turn when he goes on board a ship; and, above everything, he has acquired the language of the sea, and is in every way better fitted for the rough and tumble of sea life; the question whether he knows how to haul out an earring or not, is of secondary importance. I do not think the Commission was practical in its suggestions about having training ships as Mr. Brassey proposes. One hundred boys are not enough to have any complete organisation, and organisation is the root and branch of good discipline. As to the plan of 100 boys going off to the ships daily to school, you might just as well leave them on shore altogether. The fewer boys you have on board a ship the greater is the expense. A two-decker, with 500 boys, is a very good style of training ship, perhaps the best we have in the Royal Navy. A three-decker (with 700 boys) is more economical per head. I think Mr. Brassey says that the apprentice system still supplies us, out of these 15,000 boys which are required to keep up a proper number of men in the merchant service, with 3,500.

MR. BRASSEY: 3,500 are supplied every year from that source.

MR. WILLIAMSON: There are over 16,000 in the merchant service.

MR. BRASSEY: That is the Liverpool calculation, and it has been endorsed by the Board of Trade.

Captain WILSON: That question I was going to raise, but I think the number you estimate from the training ships is in excess. I should say you do not get 1,000; in fact, when I was in the city the other day, and I had the honour of speaking before the Lord Mayor, I did not please some gentlemen present, because I told them what was a fact, that private training ships are not training ships proper. These vessels were valuable for the purpose,—there were very few of them,—they were lent for a definite and distinct purpose, but instead of that they are turned into charitable institutions, which do a great deal of good no doubt, but such boys as they do train are trained at a very expensive rate, and, collectively, they only turn out about one-fifth the number they ought, for with all due deference to my friend, Mr. Stirling Lyon, the boys in the royal training ships do not cost 60*l.* a year, and the boys are not trained for the Merchant Service for 19*l.* each. The boys sent to sea from most private training ships, cost on an average, 65*l.* per head.²

¹ The number is not so much in excess as at first appears, for supposing the boys were apprenticed for four years, there would be upwards of 50,000 serving to make good the waste on 50,000 able seamen.

² The Marine Society is an exception to the rule; boys from them are usually