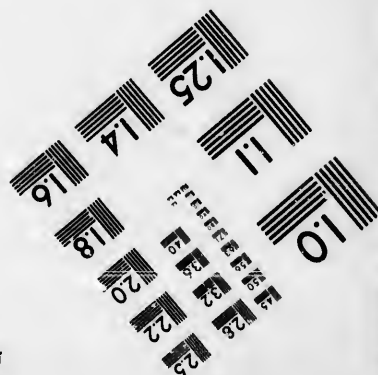
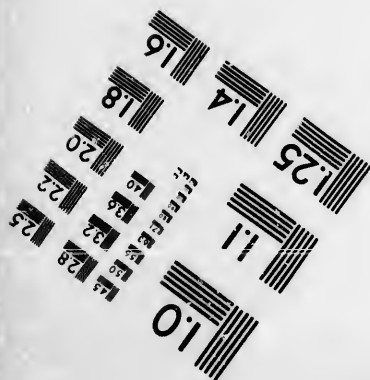
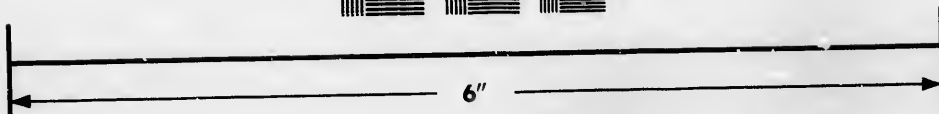
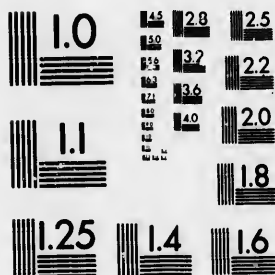


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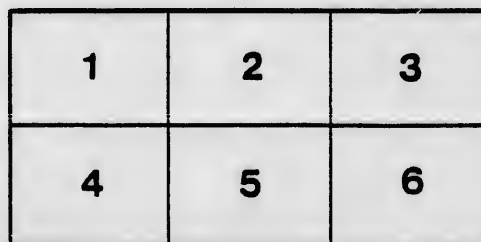
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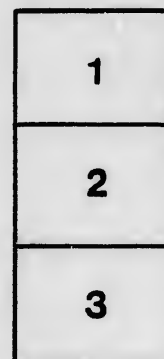
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LECTURE.

Friday, February 18th, 1876.

ADMIRAL SIR HASTINGS R. YELVERTON, G.C.B., in the Chair.

HOW BEST TO IMPROVE AND KEEP UP THE SEAMEN OF THE COUNTRY.

By T. BRASSEY, Esq., M.P.

It will be my object in the present paper to be practical. There has of late been too much vague declamation as to the decay of our British seamen.

I do not therefore propose to dwell at length on the faults of our sailors, I shall prefer to occupy your time with proposals for ameliorating their condition, their character, and their seamanship.

It will be convenient to clear the difficult path before us by stating the number of foreigners employed, and the annual waste of seamen in our Merchant Service. With regard to the number of foreigners employed under the British flag, while the proportion is, no doubt, considerable, the number does not increase. The proportion of foreigners to British seamen, which was 12·6 in 1864, was reduced to 10·87 in 1873. I may in this place observe, that some of the ablest of our shipowners have entertained the opinion that foreigners are an indispensable element in our Merchant Service. To quote only one authority, this opinion was expressed by Mr. Lamport, in giving evidence before Mr. Lindsay's Committee in 1860. He was asked, "What, in your opinion, would have been the present state of things, had the navigation laws not been repealed?" He replied, "I think there would have been more British tonnage afloat than there is now, but I do not think we should have been able to man our British ships with British sailors." "The rate of wages must have been tremendous, in order to bring this about."

It has been computed that, from various causes—death, drowning, desertion, the giving up of employment at sea in order to obtain occupation on shore—our Mercantile Marine loses every year about 16,000 men. The apprenticeship system supplies about 3,500 men per annum, and the training-ships probably as many more. The boys not apprenticed, and the ordinary seamen, supply the remaining 9,000 men.

As a matter of fact, no great difficulty has been experienced in obtaining the number of men required for the Merchant Service. The quality may have been unsatisfactory; but the number has been adequate. Our shipowners have never experienced the difficulty which has been felt in Germany, where laden ships have been detained for weeks, because a crew could not be obtained.

In a recent communication to *The Times*, Mr. Dunlop, a large shipowner, of Glasgow, states that no shipowner finds any difficulty at the present time in manning his vessel; and that, if the number of seamen were materially increased, it could only produce a redundancy.

Having shown that there is no reasonable ground for a complaint of a deficiency in point of number, we have now to consider the allegations as to the want of discipline and seamanship.

It may be pointed out, *in limine*, that the same complaints have been urged before every Royal Commission and Committee of Parliament which has been appointed, since the termination of the great Continental War, to inquire into maritime affairs.

As on all similar occasions in the past, so in the latest inquiry by the Royal Commission on unseaworthy ships, witness after witness dilated on the profligacy, the drunkenness, the physical, the professional, and the moral deterioration of our seamen. The Mercantile Marine is acknowledged to be the true backbone of the fighting Navy; and those who heard the gloomy story could scarcely suppress a misgiving that England had forfeited her claim to be the mistress of the seas.

When, however, we turn over the page of history, we find that the crews even of our fighting vessels have often contained a large proportion of ill-conducted and unskilful men. Many seamen serving in the Royal Navy in the early years of the present century, unwilling captives of the press-gang, were equally destitute of patriotism and fidelity. It has been said that, on one occasion, when the fleet was being paid off at Portsmouth, a large number of the seamen refused to come on shore, and sailed direct to Brest to take service in the French Fleet. In the narrative of the capture of the British frigate "Macedonia" by the American frigate "United States," the historian James gives some details which I shall venture to quote:—

"The great proportion of British seamen among the crew of the American frigate accounted, it is said, for so many of her guns being named after British ships, and some of the most celebrated British naval victories. 'Captain Carden,' says Mr. Marshall, 'observing 'Victory' painted on the ship's side over one port, and 'Nelson' over another, asked Commodore Decatur the reason of so strange an anomaly; he answered: 'The men belonging to those guns served many years with Lord Nelson, and in the 'Victory.' 'The crew of the gun named Nelson were once bargemen to that great chief, and they claim the privilege of using his illustrious name in the way you have seen.' The Commodore also publicly declared to Captain Carden that there was not a seaman in his ship who had not served from five to twelve years in a British man-of-war."

Passing on to the inquiries by the Manning Committee in 1853, the advantages, if any there were, of compulsory apprenticeship should have been conspicuously shown in the high discipline of the Mercantile Marine at that period. What, however, was the language held by the shipowners in regard to their crews? It was most unfavourable. The Chairman of the London Shipowners,

Mr. Phillips, went so far as to declare that the seamen were a demoralised race, and that the permission to man British ships with foreign seamen would be productive of great good.

I am not attempting to deny that many of our merchant seamen are unworthy of the British flag, but when we are told that their condition is worse than it was, I ask for evidence in support of this unwelcome assertion. What new circumstances have arisen to injure the character of our seamen? Some influences there must have been working for their good. In part owing to the introduction of a test examination, our merchant ships are more ably commanded than they were. Our seamen are acknowledged to be a better educated body; the ships in which they sail are greatly improved in comfort, in safety, and in speed. In the old days there were no ships which could be compared with the noble iron clippers of the present day. On the other hand, we cannot fail to recognise the injurious tendency of some of the modern changes in the constitution of the Merchant Service. Steamers have drawn away the best men from the foreign-going sailing ships. A higher rate of wages is paid in steamers, and they offer the further advantages of a shorter absence from, and a periodical return to, a home port, with superior provisions, lighter work, and better accommodation.

In the foreign trade the best men, as a consequence, have been separated from the mass employed in the sailing ships; and with a result analogous to that which followed in the French Army from the formation of an excessive number of *corps d'élite*, comprising the Imperial Guards, cavalry, and artillery. When the best recruits had been picked out for all those favoured corps, the residuum which remained to form the infantry of the line was destitute alike of physical vigour and of military ardour.

Again, the growth of the large towns, which are the great entrepôts of our maritime commerce, has tended to the degradation of the seamen employed in the foreign trade. The temptations to vice multiply with the increasing density of the population; in the smaller towns the atmosphere is less contaminated.

It is more difficult to draw any general conclusion as to the quality of seamen than it is to ascertain the proportion which the supply bears to the demand; but there is one arithmetical test by which the efficiency of the crews can be partly determined, namely, by noting the increase or the reduction in the number of men employed to man a given tonnage. If this test be applied, it will be found that there is no evidence to show that there has been a deterioration in the quality of the seamen.

In 1814, the Merchant Service gave employment to 173,000 men, or about the same number of men as in 1861; but in the interval the tonnage of our shipping had increased from 2,681,000 tons, at the earlier date, to 5,895,000 tons at the later. The proportion of men to 100 tons in sailing ships was 4·17 in 1854, 3·25 in 1869, and 3·22 in 1873.

On the whole it would appear that, while our seamen have not deteriorated, yet the character and seamanship of a large number among

them leaves much to be desired. In the coasting trade, however, there are no complaints. The vessels are manned by the owners or part owners and their families, just as they have been for many years past. Neither are there any general complaints on the part of owners of steamers. Mr. McIver, his partner, Mr. Burns, and Mr. Wilson, of Hull, when examined by the Duke of Somerset, spoke of their men in terms of commendation; and their opinion, backed by the officials of the Board of Trade, presented a cheering contrast to the gloomy picture drawn by the owners of sailing vessels. On the other hand, in sailing ships employed in long voyages, the crews are composed of the residuum of the seamen—men too often without homes, and without characters to lose, careless and reckless as they have ever been, without the slightest spark of loyalty to their employers, and probably greatly inferior in all these respects to any class of skilled workmen on shore.

To what causes are we to ascribe these defects, and how can they be remedied? Among the causes I would enumerate:—(1.) The absence of encouragements or pecuniary reward for good conduct or skilful seamanship; (2.) Insufficiency of pay, at least, until a very recent date, and, in some ships, bad treatment; (3.) The system of payment in advance before sailing, and the delay in paying off crews on their arrival in port; (4.) The want of systematic training for seamen; (5.) The inadequate professional status of the officers of the Merchant Service.

Taking these subjects in the order in which they have been enumerated, we have first to deal with the question of wages. The owners of sailing ships stand alone among the employers of this country in expressing a universal concurrence of opinion that their men are deteriorating. The explanation is not far to seek.

Until a very recent period, the wages of seamen have been low by comparison with the reward of any description of labour, requiring the same skill and experience, ashore.

Looking back to the earlier dates included in the tables, published by the Board of Trade, we find that the wages of an able seaman rarely exceeded 50s. a-month; and when we take into view the many privations of a seaman's life, the inferiority of his situation to that of any other skilled labourer, was such, that, unless there had been some compensating circumstances, our ships could not have been manned.

There are two considerations which together have operated to keep down the wages of the seamen. The apprenticeship to the sea has been less expensive than the apprenticeship to any other skilled trade. "The fact," says Mr. Mill, "that a course of instruction is required of even a low degree of costliness, or that the labourer must be maintained, for a considerable time, from other sources, suffices everywhere to exclude the great body of the labouring people from the possibility of such competition."

Boys, from the moment they go afloat, cease to be an expense to their parents; hence the poorest among the labouring class, who alas! form the majority, are able to bring up their sons to the sea.

Again, the employment of the sailor has been ill-paid, because it has been invested with all the charms which belong to an adventurous life. "The dangers," says Adam Smith, "and hair-breadth escapes of a life of adventures, instead of disheartening young people, seem frequently to recommend a trade to them. A tender mother among the inferior ranks of the people is often afraid to send her son to a school at a seaport town, lest the sight of the ships, and the conversation and adventures of the sailors should entice him to go to sea. The distant prospect of hazards from which we can hope to extricate ourselves by courage and address is not disagreeable to us, and does not raise the wages of labour in any employment."

In pointing out that in foreign-going sailing-ships generally, and especially in those which have been the property of men of limited capital, the wages have not been sufficient to attract good men into the employment, I do not imply that there has been a selfish unwillingness on the part of the shipowners to do justice to the seamen. I am simply pointing out that the conditions offered have been less attractive than those presented by other employments.

Quite recently the wages of seamen have been advanced, doubtless in consequence of the competition for labour, caused by the unprecedented activity of other branches of trade. It cannot now be said that the seaman is insufficiently rewarded. The rapid advance in the rate of pay, which has lately taken place, will in time produce its effect, and probably encourage a large number of the youth of this country to look for employment afloat. Seamen, however, cannot be made in a day. The benefits to be derived from the increased supply of trained men will not be realised until the boys, who are now being attracted to the sea, have had sufficient time to learn their business.

Bad treatment has been assigned as one of the reasons why in some vessels a difficulty has been experienced in regard to manning. Whenever it has been alleged that the scale of provisions in any ships in the merchant service is insufficient, universal indignation has been expressed by shipowners. In order, therefore, to prove that there is a foundation for what has been stated, I quote the following passage from the Report of Dr. Roe, Surgeon to the British Seamen's Hospital at Callao, in answer to a circular issued from the Board of Trade by Mr. Shaw Lefevre:—"By far the greater number of British vessels which visit this port are those which have made long voyages; they have taken cargoes to some port in China, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, the East Indies, or elsewhere, and they have come on here to load with guano, having been on the average upwards of a year in performing the voyage from England to Callao. Amongst the crews of these vessels desertions are very frequent, the principal causes being—

- "1. The physical condition of the seamen.
- "2. The fact that a considerable sum of money is due to each man on his arrival here.
- "3. The system prevailing at this port of paying three months' wages in advance to each man who ships.

"At the British hospital, in the four years commencing 1st October, 1865, and ending 30th September, 1869, 251 cases of scurvy were received from 57 vessels, 27 ships sending each but a single case, and 13 ships sending each nine cases and upwards. Official investigations were instituted into the circumstances attendant on the voyages of 13 of the vessels, the crews of which were affected by scurvy, and our inquiries have established the inadequacy of this diet to maintain the health of seamen, even when supplemented by the anti-scorbutics enforced by the Merchant Shipping Act of 1867, as scurvy occurred in those vessels only in which the scale was adhered to."

The following scale will show the comparative values of different articles of food as anti-scorbutics:—

<i>Powerful Anti-scorbutics.</i>	<i>Indifferent Anti-scorbutics.</i>	<i>Powerless as Anti-scorbutics.</i>
1. Fresh juicy vegetables, as raw potatoes, onions, &c.	1. Dried vegetable matter, as preserved potatoes, compressed vegetables, &c.	1. Rice, barley, sago, arrowroot, &c.
2. Fresh fruits, as oranges, apples.	2. Fresh or preserved meats, especially within the tropics.	
3. Fruits and vegetables preserved in sugar, or otherwise, with their juices.	3. Vinegar. Lime-juice as found on board merchant ships after 12 months' voyage.	

"The salt beef and salt pork constitute the main articles of a seaman's food, and are supposed to represent an amount of nourishment which they are far from containing. Scurvy is essentially starvation. The histories of such cases as proved fatal on board the ships, and they were not a few, showed that those who laboured longest and hardest were the first to die. Officers and others, who were not required to use physical exertion, escaped the disease. One man was a prisoner, and fed on bread and water during a voyage of upwards of ninety days; he took scarcely any exercise, and for a considerable portion of the time never moved from his cell; he arrived here in good health and without a trace of scurvy, whereas all his shipmates were more or less severely affected."

"The great majority of the cases of scurvy recorded above, originated in vessels, the crews of which were not allowed vegetables whilst the ships were in port. Let it be assumed that the expense of providing food better adapted to maintain the health of the men would be greater than the expense of providing food according to the scale now in use. The food supplied is but a part of the seamen's wages, part of the value paid for their services. If, therefore, more value be given to the seaman in food, less will be required in money; and no wages will be better appreciated by the seaman than good food."

I earnestly hope that all the suggestions contained in the letter of Dr. Roe may be adopted.

The system of making advances of wages to seamen is a subject closely connected with the general question of the rate of pay. I cordially concur with the Royal Commission in their unhesitating condemnation of the advance note. Seamen are the only class of working men who are paid in advance for labour that has not been performed. It may be urged that it is hard to deny a small sum in advance to a man who is about to embark on a ten months' voyage. It may be said that he has an outfit to provide and expenses to pay for his board on shore while seeking an engagement. The answer is, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the money paid in advance is consumed in debauchery; that the man comes on board destitute of clothes, but minus the month's wages. He has discounted his advance note at a usurious rate of interest, and has probably been paid not in money, but in the most deleterious liquors. The crimp alone has derived a profit on the transaction.

Some shipowners have strongly opposed the abolition of the advance note. They have been accustomed to rely on the co-operation of the crimp to get their men on board before sailing, and they apprehend that the abolition of the advance note will lead to a small rise of wages.

For the reasons I have stated, I disagree with the objections to the reform proposed by the Royal Commission. Until a seaman is taught to depend upon his past earnings, to be sufficiently careful of the large sums often received on paying off, so as to be able to provide therefrom the kit required for the next voyage, you cannot look for improvement in their moral character.

The delay in paying off is at least as fruitful of evil as the payment of wages in advance. If a delay of forty-eight hours occurs after the arrival of a ship in dock, the seamen are necessarily thrown into the hands of the crimps. True it is that sailors' homes have been established at the large ports, and they have done great good; but, after all, the sailor's home bears a close resemblance to an embellished prison, and is not the genial and attractive hostel, to which a sailor would naturally resort, who has been cribbed, cabined, and confined under tight discipline for many months on board ship. Captain Dawson has enlarged in a recent paper in such sympathetic language on the necessity for an immediate settlement of wages after the arrival of a ship, that I need not insist further on this point.

I would offer one more suggestion connected with the question of wages which ought not to be omitted in a general review of this subject, although it is not within the province of legislation to remedy the evil which I seek to point out.

Surely it is a mistake in the Merchant Service to pay every seaman before the mast at the same rate. By preserving this unbroken uniformity, you may, it is true, avoid the risk of exciting envy and jealousy among the crew; but on the other hand, you give no encouragement under such a system to special exertion and good conduct. You draw no distinction between efficiency and utter

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,

and when the payment of the men's wages is a heavy loss to the employer.

Here I would offer a remark on the desirability of more frequent and direct personal relations between the shipowners and their seamen.

When shipowners complain that their seamen are not anxious to promote their employers' interests, that they show no gratitude for the care and the money which have been freely lavished, to furnish them with good provisions, to make their forecables comfortable, and to supply them, it may be, with books and other advantages not included in the letter of the bond, it must be remembered that mere liberality will not suffice to arouse the sentiment of personal loyalty. A non-resident proprietor may let his land at low rents, and be more than liberal in the repairs of his cottages, and yet, unless he lives among the people on his estate he will fail to keep up the warm and devoted attachment, which, in feudal times and since, has so often united together the owner and the tillers of the soil.

I have dwelt, I fear, too long on the question of wages. Except in the abolition of the advance note, and perhaps in requiring payment of a certain rate of interest for every day's delay in the settlement of wages, after the arrival of the ship, the subject is beyond the scope of legislation. It is for the shipowners to consider the question, and by a wise generosity to encourage a good class of our working population to follow the sea.

It is now necessary to refer to the subject of training seamen for the Merchant Service. The abolition of compulsory apprenticeship has been deplored by many, and the alleged deterioration of seamen has been attributed to the relaxation of the laws by which it was enforced. We have, however, the testimony of the late Mr. Lamport and others, to show that compulsory apprenticeship led to grave abuses. There is no reason why an ordinary seaman or boy should not pick up seamanship, as well, when serving in that capacity afloat as if he were regularly indentured. It is a fatal objection to the compulsory plan that boys, who are worth anything, are certain to break their indentures. Such, at least, has been the experience of the present training ships. The Managing Committees have, therefore, determined not to ship any more boys as apprentices.

I now turn to another and a less impracticable plan for increasing the supply of seamen by the establishment of additional school ships. I commence by considering the proposal in a politico-economical aspect.

An artificial training system, must, if it is to produce a radical improvement in the *personnel* of our vast Merchant Navy, be carried out on a very extended scale. Now, if by such an extended training system you succeed in producing a large additional number of seamen, you introduce a disturbing element into the maritime labour-market, which must have the effect of depreciating the rate of wages. But it has been already shown that the wages of seamen have, until a recent date, been lower than those earned by any other class of skilled workmen; and the inference has been drawn that the inferiority in

the quality of seamen has been attributable to that cause. If, on the other hand, you limit the number of boys in training, in strict accordance with the requirements of the Naval Reserve,—and the Liverpool shipowners, who are the warmest and ablest advocates of the training system, have never suggested that we should go further,—then you will fail in producing any appreciable improvement in the efficiency and supply of seamen for the Merchant Service.

Having given my most careful consideration to this question, and having studied the various plans proposed from time to time by Sir Frederick Grey and others, I have arrived at the conclusion that the scheme projected by the Manning Committee, and approved by Sir Frederick Grey, is the only practicable plan. Any scheme for a partial contribution by the Government and the shipowners would break down, because the majority of the shipowners will not contribute voluntarily, and you cannot in fairness extort a contribution under the compulsion of law. The only reliable source, to which we can look for pecuniary aid in support of training ships, is the public purse; and the State cannot be called upon to expend a sixpence more than it is necessary to lay out in order to provide for the wants of the public service.

The plan of the Manning Commission was, as it is well known, to establish ten school ships, distributed at the principal ports. Each ship was to be capable of receiving 200 boys, 100 of whom were to be nominated by the Admiralty and supported by the State; the remaining 100 were to be day boarders, who were to be maintained at the expense of their friends. The ships were to be moored to a quay, so as to give ready access to the shore. A commencement might be made upon the plan of the Commission by establishing a ship of the class described at a few of the principal ports. One or two might be established at Liverpool, another at Cardiff, another at Cork, another at Glasgow, and one in the Tyne. In each of these ships 100 boarders should be entered under an engagement to join the Naval Reserve. They should be trained, according to the plan of the Commission, for one year, on precisely the same system now adopted on board the "St. Vincent." At sixteen they should go to sea in the Merchant Service; at twenty they should be required to join the Navy for a year, to be trained in gunnery, according to the plan sketched out by Captain Wilson in his recent lecture before this Institution. In each of the school ships there would be vacancies for 100 additional boys, who might be either boarders or day boarders. The fees for the day boarders might be paid by the Education Department. The boarders would be supported by the subscriptions of the merchants and shipowners, or by the contributions of wealthy and benevolent persons, desirous of availing themselves of the facilities, afforded by the Government on behalf of poor boys, in whom they might feel an interest. The number of boys in training in the school ships at Portsmouth and Plymouth should be reduced, so that the aggregate number should not be increased by the establishment of the new training ships at the commercial ports. If the plan succeeded, the number of naval school ships at the commercial ports might be gradually increased.

The recent destruction by fire of the "Warspite" and the "Goliath"

has aroused the public interest in the training ships; and the gallantry and discipline exhibited by the youthful crews have been accepted as a proof that the training they receive is perfect in all respects. The belief has accordingly been gaining ground that the difficulty of manning the Merchant Service satisfactorily can be met by the multiplication of training ships of the same class. In my judgment there could not be a greater mistake, and in that belief I am confirmed by Captain Wilson, and by many other competent authorities, whose opinions I might quote if the time at my disposal permitted. Let us acknowledge with thankfulness the good work that is being done on board these charitable, industrial, or reformatory ships. I wish God speed to the benevolent men, who have sought to rescue hundreds and thousands of little children from the vile associations, in which they have been born, and to bring them up to an honest calling. But let us not suppose that the low morality of our forcecastles, which has been so deeply, and, alas! in too many cases so justly, deplored, can be raised by recruiting the Merchant Service from the pauper and criminal classes. We want to draw the great mass of our seamen from pure and untainted sources; and if we wish that our honest and self-supporting artisans should send their sons to sea, we must give them some assurance that they will not be thrown among boys of another class, with whom they would be afraid to allow them to associate on shore.

It has been already said that the training of seamen in school ships is after all an artificial system. The open sea is the only true place for training seamen. Already the greatest difficulty is experienced in the Navy in finding ships for sending the boys, trained by the Admiralty, to sea.

I, therefore, venture to suggest a plan for encouraging shipowners to take apprentices under an engagement, at the end of their apprenticeship to serve for a year in the Navy in sea-going ships, according to the plan of Sir Frederick Grey, or in barracks according to the plan of Captain Wilson. These Government aided apprentices should not be entered until the age of 15. At 19 they would be out of their time, and they would be only 20 at the close of their year of service in the Navy. The following scale of bounty to shipowners and apprentices is suggested for discussion. It may be premised that the ships should be of a class adapted for instructing boys in seamanship, the number of boys limited in proportion to the tonnage, and the boys themselves approved by an Officer representing the Admiralty. For every apprentice so selected the shipowners should receive, at the end of the first year, a bonus of 15*l.*, and a further bonus might be paid to the shipowner at the end of the second year of 5*l.* In the third year the apprentice should receive a gratuity of 5*l.*, which would supplement his wages, and be an encouragement to him not to break his indentures. At the end of the fourth year, on joining the Navy, the apprentice should receive a further bonus of 10*l.* The total amount of these payments is 35*l.*, an insignificant sum in comparison with the cost of training a boy in the Navy from his enrolment until he becomes an able seaman. The seamen trained under this system would have been afloat in sea going ships throughout their apprenticeship, and

would only require drill in gunnery, in order to become valuable auxiliaries to the Royal Navy.

The consideration of the condition of our seamen would be imperfect without some allusion to the necessity of establishing a pension fund. In all the other leading maritime states, provisions have been made for the maintenance of seamen in old age and in sickness. The most complete organization for this purpose is to be found in France, where it was established by the great Colbert as a co-ordinate and essential part of his plan for compulsory service in the Navy. The institution has been maintained in its integrity to the present time.

The subject received the most ample consideration from Lord Ellenborough's commission, who most strongly recommended the establishment of a compulsory self-supporting Seamen's Pension Fund. The subject has been incidentally examined by the Manning Commission and Mr. Lindsay's Committee, and the proposals of Lord Ellenborough have received their warmest approbation. It has been calculated that a payment of 1*l.*, a year, commencing at the age of 14, would provide a pension of 12*l.*, a year at the age of 50, of 15*l.*, at the age of 52, and of 18*l.*, a year at the age of 55. In this calculation allowance is made for a considerable number of seceders. The Government possess in the numerous shipping offices the clerical staff necessary for carrying out the recommendations, which have so often been made in favour of a Seamen's Pension Fund.

While I trust that some if not all the suggestions contained in this paper may be approved by the shipowners and the legislature, and produce their anticipated fruits in the amelioration of the condition of our seamen, I am well aware that it is in vain to expect, by any plans for their improvement, that we can neutralize entirely the evil influences under which our seamen, from the nature of their calling, are compelled to live. The sailor boy must quit his home at a tender age, and must pass his youth amid the temptations to be found in every seaport. How much of whatever there is of good in human nature—frail it must be at the best—is derived from home influences.

"We love the precepts for the teacher's sake."

In proportion as we value these blessings for ourselves, we shall sympathise with the sailor in his moral and social privations; and rejoice that among his class there are to be found so many who have escaped the contaminating influences to which they are exposed.

Having dealt with the case of seamen, I turn to the Officers of the Merchant Service. The Duke of Somerset's Commission, following the unanimous opinion of the witnesses, whom they had examined, spoke in highly favourable terms of the Officers of the Merchant Service. They said that the Board of Trade examinations had exercised a beneficial influence in raising the standard of education, and attainment in the art of navigation, and that the improvement among the Officers offered a bright contrast to the deterioration among the seamen.

None will be found to dispute the general truth of these conclusions. There is reason, however, to believe that in the nautical profession

many may yet be found equally unworthy in character and in knowledge to occupy the important position of a ship master. Several members of the Consular Body, in their replies to the letter of inquiry in 1872, adverted to the deficiencies of the British ship masters, and to their bad conduct on shore. Mr. Gould, in his Report on the British Maritime Service in the Baltic, gives some figures, which show that British shipping is being gradually displaced by the Swedes and Norwegians, and he attributes their superiority in the race, not as it might have been expected, from the general tone of the shipowners, to the faults of the seamen, but rather to the inferiority of our ship-masters. Mr. Gould specially refers to the utter ignorance of foreign languages, displayed by the English, in marked contrast with the German and Scandinavian Officers, all of whom have received a good commercial education, and speak English and probably other languages in addition. Several of the Consuls allude to the insufficiency of the salaries given to Officers of the Merchant Service. Unquestionably ship-masters are underpaid, as compared with persons of equal responsibility on shore, but the remedy lies with the parties to the bargain. The Legislature cannot interfere, and public opinion cannot do much. It is certain that there is immense competition among the more educated men before the mast for promotion to the quarter-deck; and the shipowner has a perfect right to take advantage of any turn of the market in his favour, provided always that the Officers employed are equal to their work. In our own day, as in all former times, the Officers of the Merchant Service have been a mixed and various body, including many gentlemen of high bearing and education, and, at the lower end of the scale, no inconsiderable number, who possess none of the qualifications necessary, even for the most modest command. It is indeed unnecessary to insist on the same standard of excellence in all cases. The value of the ship and of the cargo, and the extent and difficulty of the voyage, must be taken into consideration by the shipowner, in determining the amount of salary which he must give, and the qualifications which he will require in the commander of his ship. Every commander in the Merchant Service cannot be highly paid, but many are not so liberally rewarded as they ought to be. The illiberality of certain ship-owners was severely criticised by Captain Toynbee, in his speech at the Society of Arts in their last session, when he referred to ships of 800 tons in the East India trade, where the masters were receiving only £10 a-month. Even in the best employment every Officer below the rank of Master is badly paid. The expectation of promotion is an inducement to subordinates to serve for years on a small pittance of from £4 to £7 a-month, considerably less in short than the wages of the carpenter or the boat-swain, who are working under their orders.

Allowing that the Government cannot do very much to elevate the professional status of the Officers of the Merchant Service, and that it can do nothing to increase their rate of pay, I venture to make one or two suggestions, which I should be glad to see adopted by the departments concerned. The Board of Trade may raise the status, and improve the qualifications of the merchant Officers, by enlarging the

scope of their examinations, and by giving a certificate of a superior grade to Officers, who could pass in one or more languages, in which a certain colloquial facility should be required. To these acquirements, commercial subjects, including, for example, the theory of foreign exchanges, and the elements of commercial law, might be added with advantage. If the good results, which I venture to anticipate, were to follow from the encouragement, thus afforded, to a wider range of study, the Board of Trade might be justified in making the higher certificates, which at first should be the reward of those who passed a voluntary examination, a necessary qualification for the command of any ship exceeding a certain tonnage.

The Admiralty might co-operate in this important work, and render a great service to the country, by requiring all Officers, before they receive commissions in the Reserve, to serve on probation for a year in the Royal Navy. Here again I am only repeating a proposal already made by Captain Wilson. The advantages of such a regulation ought to be mutual. The mercantile Officers would become in some degree familiar with the duties they would be called upon to perform in time of war, and the Admiralty would have an opportunity of testing the qualifications of candidates, before giving them commissions. In future, all Officers before they enter the Reserve, should be required to go through a three months' course of gunnery at Portsmouth; they should receive adequate pay while so employed; and if they failed to make reasonable progress, should be dismissed from the Reserve.

It would be an encouragement to nautical study, and a graceful recognition of the Merchant Service, if a few studentships were founded at the Naval University at Greenwich, which should be opened to competition by all officers, after four years' service at sea as mate or master of a merchant-ship. They should be tenable for one year, and should be of sufficient annual value to cover the necessary expenses of the student, and to give him in addition a sum equivalent to the income, which he would have earned, if he had been following his profession. I assume that each of the studentships would cost the Government about £120 a year. Five might be offered in the first instance, one of which should be reserved for Scotland, and another for Ireland; and the number might be increased if the experiment proved a success.

The good example of the Government might probably find imitators among the merchant princes and shipowners, who would found nautical studentships, just as fellowships were founded by pious and benevolent men in ancient times at Oxford and Cambridge.

It is necessary that I should conclude. Many difficulties in the way of carrying out my latter suggestions may present themselves to the minds of Naval Officers, even though they are sincerely disposed to welcome as comrades and messmates the representatives of the Mercantile Marine. Something, however, must be done to make the resources of our maritime trade in men and ships available for the emergency of war. The maritime armaments of the great continental powers have been developed in such vast proportions, that it is only by the development of our naval strength, that our country can maintain her claim to

rank as a first-rate power. Our fleets cannot, however, be increased without such additions to the estimates, as the country would never tolerate in time of peace. Naval expenditure may be economized by keeping a large proportion of your Officers and men on half-pay or in harbour ships, but a naval force gives a fallacious appearance of strength, unless it be kept in full efficiency by frequent employment afloat. It should, therefore, be the aim of our naval administrators to create a thoroughly reliable reserve in the Merchant Service. The officers and the men of the Reserve must be made sailors in the maritime trade of the country, and they must be trained to the use of arms in the Navy. Once more, if it be true that the condition of the Merchant Service is not in all respects satisfactory; if you want to raise the tone and the professional standing of the merchant Officers, and to improve the seamanship, and to raise the character of their crews, a closer intercourse with the accomplished and high-spirited officers and well-disciplined seamen of the sister service will prove the most effectual means of accomplishing the end in view.

I began with an enumeration of the causes of the alleged deterioration of seamen; I conclude with an enumeration of the remedial measures proposed. They are:—

- (1.) The abolition of the advance notes.
- (2.) The shipowners to be required to allow interest in case of unnecessary delay in paying off their crews.
- (3.) The Government to give a bonus to shipowners for apprentices, trained under suitable conditions, and under engagement to serve for a year in the Navy, and afterwards to join the Reserve.
- (4.) Training ships under the Admiralty to be established at the commercial ports, according to the plan of the Manning Commission.
- (5.) A compulsory self-supporting Seamen's Pension Fund to be established under the management of the Board of Trade and the guarantee of the State.
- (6.) Voluntary examinations in modern languages and commercial subjects to be established for masters and mates; studentships for the officers of the Merchant Service to be founded at Greenwich.
- (7.) A scale of provisions to be prepared by the Board of Trade, and ships bound on long ocean voyages to be required to be provided accordingly.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Shaw Lefevre has very kindly offered to give us a few remarks on the subject, and I will ask him to begin.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE, M.P.: I presume it is out of kind consideration to my Parliamentary duties, which may call me hence in a few minutes, that you have asked me to lead this discussion. In the presence of so many able and more distinguished persons, I have considerable hesitation in doing so; but at all events, it gives me the opportunity of being the first to thank my friend Mr. Brassey for his extremely interesting and able paper. It shows, as all his works do, that deep study, that fairness and moderation of views, and that sense of public duty which so distinguish him. With most of his premises I most cordially agree. We have talked over the questions together on many occasions, and I think we have worked out some of them together. I agree with him in thinking that there has been great exaggeration in what has been said with regard to the deterioration of

our seamen. Mr. Brassey was good enough to quote from the replies to the circulars which I issued when I was at the Board of Trade five years ago to our Consuls abroad. Those replies might, with great advantage, be compared to replies made to a similar circular issued by the Board of Trade twenty-five years previously, and if you compare those two sets of replies, you will find that many as are the complaints recently made by our Consuls, they were far greater twenty-five years ago. I think without a single exception twenty-five years ago every Consul condemned our sailors in every possible way; but if you look at the replies which have been published in answer to the circular, which I issued three years ago, you will find that though a great number of Consuls speak in very unfavourable terms of our seamen, yet a good many others speak much more favourably. My impression is, therefore, that the seamen have not deteriorated; but I believe public attention has been much more called to the subject, that the seamen have not improved relatively so much as other classes, so that there is still too much reason to complain of their general condition. Seamen we must recollect are somewhat of an international class: they suffer from evils not only at home but abroad, and when we know the condition of things at places like Callao, Quebec, New York, San Francisco, and many other ports where our seamen are brought into contact with influences of the worst character, we cannot be altogether surprised that they have not joined in the general improvement which we see in other classes. Mr. Brassey has also referred to the proportion of foreigners, and I think that he has shown that the relative number of foreigners has not so much increased as people suppose; in fact it has somewhat diminished of late years, and I do not think there is much ground for complaint on that score. Mr. Brassey then went on to speak of the training-ships for boys, and I quite concur in what he has said about the existing training-ships in our mercantile ports. They were formed generally with a double object, the main object being to rescue boys from the streets—what are called the street arabs. Others are reformatory ships, whose object is mainly to bring boys of that class to a somewhat better course of life. In that they have been eminently successful, but they have not been so successful in training boys to the Merchant Service. Captain Wilson has lately pointed out that for the most part these boys when they leave the training-ships are not physically in a condition fitting them to be entered for the Naval Service; and as we may presume that the Merchant Service requires men of equal physical condition to those of the Navy, we may conclude that these boys are not fit for the Merchant Service. My strong impression is, that a very large proportion of the boys that now proceed from these reformatory and training-ships are not really good material for the Merchant Service. At the same time I have no wish to throw any discredit upon those ships. I believe they are doing an extremely good work in training and educating boys from the criminal class to a better state of life, and I wish them every success. Another defect about them is that the boys leave the ship at too early an age. I believe for the most part they are sent from these ships at the age of fifteen. Now all experience shows that the best period for training boys for the sea, whether for the Navy or for marine service, is between fifteen and sixteen: therefore I was glad recently to see in a circular issued by the Admiralty that they make it a condition of the grant towards such boys as enter the third-class Naval Volunteers, that they shall be trained up to the age of sixteen. The period between fifteen and sixteen is really the important age for training boys for sea service, and unless you can keep the boys between those two years, I believe very little good is done. At the same time it must be admitted that there is great difficulty in getting boys between those ages. For the Navy we enter the boys at fifteen, and they remain a year or a year and a quarter on board the training ships, and are then drafted for sea service. But my friend Lord Gilford (whom I see here), will, I have no doubt, tell us that there is no very abundant supply of boys for the Navy. It is by no means easy to get the contingent of boys required for the Naval Service. We require every year something like from 2,500 to 3,000 boys, and I believe at this moment the number is somewhat less; and I have a recollection of the difficulty in getting the adequate number. Then further, these boys who enter at the age of fifteen are paid by the Naval Service 9*l.* a year as wages, besides a free kit; and my strong impression is that if we go in for a large system of training boys for the Merchant Service

it will be found necessary, if you wish to retain them between the ages of fifteen and sixteen, to pay them wages. I need hardly say that that will add considerably to the expense of the operation. Whether you will get the boys at all at the late age of fifteen I rather doubt. At that age all the other employments of the country are in competition with you; if you enter at an earlier age you may get them. At thirteen or fourteen I believe you could get them for two if not for three years, as proposed by Mr. Brassey. Therefore, really one of the difficulties to be considered in establishing a system of training boys for the Merchant Service is, what age are you to take the boys at? how long are you to keep them? what conditions are you to make with regard to their future service? and what prospects do you hold out to them of constant and proper employment? On all these points very much might be said. All I can say at present is, that though I have an inclination towards a scheme for training boys to the Merchant Service, I have not yet seen any scheme elaborated which I think will really hold water on those particular points. Mr. Brassey went on further to say, that in his opinion he thought it would be impossible either to get contributions from shipowners or to tax shipowners for the purpose of training boys for the Service, and that the duty and obligation and charge would practically fall on the State. For my part I cannot agree with him. I do not see any more reason for the State paying the whole expense of training boys for the Merchant Service than for paying the expense of training boys for any other trade in the country; and it appears to me to be of the first importance that shipowners should understand that this duty should fall upon them. It may be said that the Naval Service may require it; but I think it is very easy to show that the Naval Service is quite sufficiently provided for irrespective of the boys we may train in this way. I do not intend to go into the discussion that we had in this very place some time ago in regard to the entry of boys for seamen in the Navy; but I showed then that we have in the Navy sufficient men to send all possible ships that we have to sea on the outbreak of war without calling on our Reserves. In addition to that, we have the Coast Guard men, and some four thousand Naval pensioners; but we have also twelve thousand first class Naval Reserve men, and I think Lord Gilford will say that if these men can be obtained at the opening of war with such additional training as might be given in a few weeks or a month, they would be an extremely available class. But now, what is the possibility of the wants of the Navy at the outbreak of a war? I presume nobody supposes that you would hire sailing vessels to send to sea. What we shall want seamen for, will be to send them on board steamers. No doubt we shall have to cover the sea with steamers, carrying one or two guns each; and I presume the extreme number would be every steamer in the Merchant Service of this country. Now, what are the number of able seamen required to man all those steamers? I recollect going into the matter with Mr. Mayo, the Registrar of Seamen, and the calculation we made after careful enquiry was that all the steamers of this country are altogether manned by about 12,000 able seamen. Well, we have 12,000 Naval Reserve men ("not for fighting"), no doubt, but we have 12,000 Reserve men; and supposing we hired all these steamers with their crews, we should be able to place the Naval Reserve men on board, and, as I say, these steamers would not carry more than one or two guns, and a few trained men would be amply sufficient for them. Therefore I do not think there is any such claim upon the Government as would compel us to pay the expense of training boys for the Merchant Service. For my part, I am ready from a Governmental point of view to contribute towards the training of boys for the Merchant Service; but in the main I do think that the charge should fall upon the shipowners of this country. I have often heard it said that the shipowners find very great difficulty in getting men at the present day. I think Mr. Brassey has, to a great extent, shown that that impression has not a true foundation; but I would ask this question, "Where do the yachtmen get their 'men'?" I have often had occasion to ask yachtmen that question. It is a question of wages. They draw their men from a somewhat different class, from the fishermen of this country. The fishermen of this country are rather a higher class of people than the ordinary seamen. They are for the most part accustomed to fore and aft vessels, and are extremely useful for such vessels, and probably would be equally so for steamers; but the owners of yachts induce, by higher wages, some five or six thousand men every year to come from their fishing trade to the yachts. Now, I

would ask whether shipowners, by offering better terms could not get men from the same class? For my part, I believe the question of the supply of the Merchant Service is in the main a question of wages, and if shipowners give sufficient wages, the men will not be wanting.

MR. EDWIN CHADWICK, C.B.: I wish to observe upon one point of the very able, and, on the whole, most important and satisfactory paper that has been read by Mr. Brassey, the subject of training for the Mercantile Marine. I think the conclusion which he has formed, and which my honourable friend, Mr. Lefevre, has formed, on the subject of that training, has been confined to the examination of the outcome of the training ships. Now there is experience, which, if it be fairly examined, will be found to be completely conclusive in respect to the outcome of the training in schools on shore, such as, at the Limehouse School, the Greenwich School, and a number of other schools where the training has been given with a mast and a skeleton deck, proving, beyond doubt, that on shore they give them almost all that is requisite for going on board, except their sea legs, heaving the lead, and one or two other matters. If you examine ship captains, you will find that there is very little difference of opinion upon this point. The effect of the training is marked practically in this way—that it is very common, when one of those boys comes on board, for the boatswain to say, "My lad, from what ship did you come?" He answers frequently, "I have been in no ship, I came from a school," to which the boatswain's reply is, generally, "You lie; you are a deserter." Mr. Brassey, says, that it is very undesirable to train seamen from such polluted sources as the pauper schools. Now, if I were to select any class at all for a good outcome, it would be the orphan children brought up in the district half-time schools, from their infancy, and who have been uncontaminated by any association with adult paupers as in the Union Houses, an essential distinction; and if you examine the outcome, and take the experience of people who have had experience of those boys, you will find that they stand in the highest class; there is nothing on board any of the training-ships that will exceed them, of this same class of children. I venture to say that, upon a recent report and examination as to the outcome on board the "Goliath." It was an enquiry made from every ship and place where they had gone, and the report was uniformly good, with exceedingly few exceptions. Now it is exceedingly important to consider these outcomes; because, if you can train children on shore, you can provide a mast and skeleton deck for about £500, and you may train about eight or ten times the number on this method that you do on board ship. I think if that be fairly examined, it will be found to be one of the most cheap and economical ways of providing for an addition to the Mercantile Marine, and you would see in the result that it would be very desirable to have masts and these naval exercises extended throughout all the other ports and all the elementary schools that are there. I want it almost exclusively on sanitary grounds, because it is found that in these schools the naval training is an exceedingly good addition to the gymnastic training. We got a man from the "Excellent," who gave the boys naval training and the exercise of the guns, and altogether it is so valuable an addition to the gymnastics that are requisite for the bodily treatment of these children, that I would recommend its being imported into schools for the simple up-bringing of the children of the wage classes without any reference to any special service; but for civil manual work, as well as for naval and military service. But, in respect of their choice, there is this difficulty of bridging over the time. They usually get them through the training in these shore-schools at about 13, and there is the difficulty of bridging over the time till the 15th year, when they are left to choose for themselves; they are not under obligation to join the Service, but about 70 per cent. of them have hitherto volunteered for the Navy, and whenever they have the opportunity, they volunteer for the Royal Marine. On asking the cause of their volunteering for the Royal Marine, the answer has been almost uniformly: "Because the Mercantile Marine is so dirty and so disorderly." The difference between the two services in sanitary condition is attested by this fact, that the death rate in the Mercantile Marine is about 18 in 1,000, while setting aside accidents in the Royal Marine, exclusive of deaths, in service, and in the home stations, it is not above 6 in 1,000. One great element has been omitted in the consideration of this question—as to the desire of the

shippers themselves to co-operate in this. It is a perfectly notorious fact, that shippers send out crews which would not be sent out but for full insurance. I think more might be said upon this; but I must only challenge the facts as to the sufficiency of the examination upon which the conclusion is based, that training and keeping are adequate for securing the necessary discipline, and are not half so expensive as in the training ships.

MR. DONALD CURRIE: Sir Hastings Yelverton and Gentlemen,—I had not expected to be called upon to say anything on this subject, although it is one in which every shipowner should take a very deep interest, but I will say, as briefly as possible, a word or two respecting the points brought forward by Mr. Brassey. I do not know any subject which should be more interesting or more easy of settlement to a shipowner than this question of manning the Mercantile Marine; and yet I do not think there is any shipowner quite capable of exactly deciding what ought to be done. It is a very complex question. It has become involved through late agitation and discussion, and it is not yet ripe for settlement upon a proper basis. National interests have to be considered in relation to war, and I advocate last year before the President of the Board of Trade, that our desire was, if possible, to secure interchangeableness between the Royal Navy and the Mercantile Marine. I think it can be accomplished. I think it ought to be accomplished. The Mercantile sailor is just as courageous and ready for his work—if he only knew what to do—as the seaman of the Royal Navy; but he must be trained for the qualities required in war, and the question at present is this: how is the interest of the shipowner since the abolition of the Navigation Laws, and with the competition to which he is exposed, to be brought into harmony with the national requirements, which should compel from him a ready acquiescence in anything that is for the national good? It is said, for example, Why should not the wages of A.B.'s in the fore-castle be paid according to their ability? I think it would be nearly impossible to settle that, because you have no rule of judging before a man goes to sea, what his qualities are. The question is, will a man consent to go on the condition that the captain shall, upon his return, gauge his value? That will be a question of contract, and a difficult one. Again, if you carry out the principle involved in the suggestion of classing men as A.B.'s upon certificates, you virtually establish a trades union, and you play into the hands of those who have advocated this trades union. At the time certificated engineers were put into ships the great difficulty pointed out by steam-shipowners to the Board of Trade was this: "We cannot get qualified men with certificates," but the Board of Trade told us that the Amalgamated Society of Engineers would get us plenty. At that time we had to send the worst of engineers, often drunken fellows, on board because they held certificates; so if you say now: "We will only take four-year A.B.'s," you will commence by limiting the already small supply of seamen available for our ships. This means beginning at the wrong end. I think the great thing is to hold out inducements to the sailors to behave themselves, and by the encouragement of the old and friendly relationship between the sailor and the shipowner. That, however, is a matter not to be settled by legislation, though there are certain legislative means by which, perhaps, you can help to arrive at that end. I have had Masters of the Royal Navy and Captains of frigates applying for command of one of our steamers; but there is a natural feeling among the Mercantile Marine that they should have nothing to do with naval men, while naval men do not care to associate with the Mercantile Marine officers. Hence there is a want of sympathy between the one and the other, which I would like to get done away with by making them interchangeable in early youth. What is the inducement to a sailor to go into a merchant ship? Very little as far as I can see. Three days ago I engaged a first-rate chief officer—as good a man as anybody could find; and having no immediate place for him as first officer, I told him I could make him second officer. He agreed to it, but afterwards he came and told me that, as he lived in Scotland, and had a large family, he could not afford to live here, and I found that, after twelve years at sea, that man has scarcely enough to live on. Hence the question arises in my mind, What can be done to raise the status and the pay of officers, and the status and the pay of men? The question is before the Central Committee of Shipowners for consideration. There are six or seven plans, one finds favour very much in the shape

put by Mr. Brassey, which will secure the advantage of proper early education and enlightenment and a proper tone, and which, getting them into the Navy, and the Mercantile Marine afterwards, will provide some resource in their old age; for very few sailors go to sea after they are fifty, and I want to know where they go. The way to do it, perhaps, will be to arrange some system of pension with a proper early training; and that can only be got if you induce the sailor to see that he can get something on board the ship. I regretted extremely at the time that you reduced the Coastguard Service. I do not know anything more deplorable than a case such as that of the "Deutschland," and other cases where lifeboats, which might have saved many lives, have not been launched, or have not been established, when they would have been of great service under the Coastguard. If we had these Coastguard men ready for war, they would be useful for times of peace; and it was false economy which discharged so many. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre asked, Why do yachtsmen get such good men? Every one knows that yachtsmen are drawn from the fishing vessels when they are idle. Then there are able steady men who work in the yachts in the summer, making short voyages in the spring and autumn in Canadian and other vessels, which are shut up in the winter. Who was the Captain of the "Cambria," which won the race across the Atlantic? He was the Captain of one of the Canadian clippers. I have seen steamers go to sea with a crew of ninety men and not a drunken man, and amongst them there would be perhaps twenty Naval Reserve men; when my earnest shipowner tries to retain them, they do not want it; they won't be engaged for a second trip. I know men now in command of ships, who were carpenters seven or eight years ago. There is no falling-off in the raw material, but there is a falling-off somehow or another, and I think it is very much owing to the increase of so many steamers suddenly, and to the competition throughout the whole world. We should deliberately consider what is best for the national interests and how they can be secured through the Mercantile Marine, and we owe much to Mr. Brassey for the care and judgment he has shown in the maturing of a plan to secure this development in the best way in the long run.

Captain Sir GEORGE BIDDLECOMBE, R.N.: The gentleman on my right made some observation with reference to the education of boys for the sea by having a vessel established on shore. Well, I have had a very long turn at sea life, and I do not know how it is possible to make boys available for sea service by preparing them on shore. I am quite sure of that; and, therefore, I feel confident that no other system, if we are to introduce boys into the Mercantile Marine, will answer, than that of establishing vessels at our various ports in England and Ireland. I am very glad to see that the Government have lately wisely adopted an arrangement by which boys, who are found competent to join the Royal Navy from such vessels, shall receive a certain sum of money, that is, the training ships will do so, which will assist in supporting them, because, for a long time past, these Institutions have been working with very great difficulty. I speak of the "Chichester," the "Arethusa," and the vessel at Liverpool. They have been working with very great difficulty by getting contributions from their friends to support these vessels, and they have turned out a very large number of boys, some of whom have been proved, on being sent to Her Majesty's ships, to be quite equal to those boys that have been trained on board the "Implaceable," and other ships of the Navy. Now if we can train in vessels of the character that I have described boys who are efficient and can be sent into the Navy for £25, while we are training them on board our own ships at an expense of £40, £50, or £60, I think we ought to encourage the establishment of these vessels in every port in England and Ireland. Some other remarks have been made to-day which, perhaps, it is unnecessary for me to touch upon. There are so many naval men here of great experience, that it would be unworthy of me to make any remarks. Still, I would just touch upon the subject of our British seamen. I see three or four Officers here (under one or two of whom I had the honour of serving many years ago), one is Admiral, who, when he commissioned a frigate, had the greatest difficulty in getting men. And what were the men we took on board our ship? I am speaking of 1838. Why, two-thirds were useless men, until we took them to sea and instructed them. Therefore, we must not conceive that in days gone by we had all these seamen which we now look forward to, and suppose we are to

get them at once, for in 1840 there was very great difficulty in procuring men for the Navy, which induced the Government ultimately to train boys, and have continuous service seamen. I happen myself to have served in the Mercantile Marine of this country for many years. It is quite true that our mercantile seamen in my early days were the best seamen in the world, and I believe these Officers will tell you that the men we received from the Mercantile Marine were the best seamen we got on board ship, and they did their duty in a most satisfactory manner after being properly encouraged. But a seaman in the Navy now is a very different man to what he was forty years ago. In 1834, the late Admiral Smart, commanding the "Satellite," was the first man who introduced the system of exercising seamen as small arm men, and the first employment of sailors on shore for *soldiers' service* was only in 1847; and the duties which seamen have now to perform in comparison with what they were forty years ago are so various that the seamen that we had in those days from the Mercantile Marine would have been totally useless now without twelve months' exercise. I therefore think we cannot do better than go on in the old system of training men, not only for the Mercantile Marine but for the Navy; and if we can only arrange in any way to work the two together, so that the men shall serve a certain period of time in connection with the Navy as well as in the Mercantile Marine, then I think we shall attain a good object.

Colonel Lord WAVENEY: I have neither professional knowledge nor experience, but I rise to supply a very remarkable omission that I have observed throughout the whole of this debate, and that is with regard to the supply of seamen for the Marine Service and for the Royal Navy, from coasts on which, I believe, a sea breaks which would try the Officers, seamen, and ships of Her Majesty's Service, and therefore, according to all analogy, is likely to produce seamen. I speak of the supply that may be expected from Ireland and her ports. It does not appear to have been present to the recollection of gentlemen that, at this moment, there is a ship, which has been lying for some time in the Lough of Belfast, which has trained a considerable number of young men drawn from the sources on which, some discredit, —but I think unreasonable discredit—has been cast, those who have been rescued from a life of poverty or a life of crime, and also those who have taken shelter in Union Houses. I think I recollect that there was formerly a saying in the Royal Navy, that no Irish seamen were to be found, except between Cork Harbour and the Old Head of Kinsale. I know not how far that may be true, but I think the establishment of training-ships in the estuary of the Shannon, in the Harbour of Cork, in Belfast Lough, and other parts of the Irish seas, will be of great advantage, and I would recommend it to the attention of Mr. Brassey, who has given us such an excellent exposition of these matters, as a subject well worthy of consideration. The maritime enterprise of Ireland is not so extensive, but it reaches as far as the maritime enterprise of other parts of the country, and I hope that on a future occasion we shall hear, not simply of one training-ship in the harbours of Ireland, but three, and perhaps four.

Captain FIELD, R.N.: I should like to offer a remark or two. I have listened with much pleasure to the lecture given by Mr. Brassey, and we cannot be too thankful that we have a few civilians in the House of Commons who bring their minds to bear upon naval questions. This is one worthy of the attention of statesmen; but no statesman as yet has attempted to grapple with it. I do not agree with much that has fallen from him, though there was much also that I was delighted to listen to. I do not agree that it is the duty of the State to pay one single farthing towards finding seamen for the Merchant Service, taking it as a question by itself. It can only be defended on one principle—that it should tend to give a supply of men to the Navy in times of emergency. On that principle alone it is defensible.

Mr. BRASSEY: I said (p. 119), "The State cannot be called upon to expend a sixpence more than it is necessary to lay out in order to provide for the wants of the public service." I quite agree with the gallant gentleman.

Captain FIELD: But you speak of giving the shipowner a bonus to the extent of £35 for taking boys out of these training-ships, or as apprentices.

Mr. BRASSEY: To serve for a year in the Navy, and be under perpetual obligation to serve when called upon.

Captain FIELD: Even that I object to. I think that such payments are unnece-

sary and indefensible. If they are unnecessary, they cannot be justified, and I think I shall be able to show they are unnecessary. I quite agree with the extension of the training ship system round the coast, and I think it is the only proper system for us to foster; but I see no necessity for the Government to make special grants for such a purpose. We need but an extension of our present educational system. We need but to make Government capitation grants, as we do to our ordinary national schools, and we could also call upon parents to pay ordinary school fees, as they do now in the national schools. With these fees, and a Government grant, and voluntary subscriptions, we should be able to have a nautical system of education, as well as the land system, for the children of this country. I am confident that hundreds and thousands of parents would be only too glad to send their children to such schools, if they were fostered by the Government. There would be no need for the Government to pay from time to time the shipowners to take children out of such schools. The managers of such schools have no difficulty now in placing their boys in any ships. I do not agree with Mr. Brassey in his qualified approval of the plan of training lads by an artificial system. Why, the life at sea is an artificial life; and in order to induce persons to lead an artificial life, they require an artificial training. I do not agree with the remarks depreciatory of taking children from the pauper class and the criminal class. I hold that children cannot be criminals in the true sense of the word. I hold that children are pure and untainted as a rule, and if there is any taint resting upon them, it is in consequence of the surrounding conditions of their lives; but if you train them in these ships, they will be trained as God-fearing citizens, and good seamen for the State. I say with 240,000 pauper children, such as we have now, we would do well and act wisely to encourage some of them to enter our training ships; and I am satisfied that in the pauper schools of this country we should find hundreds of children who would be only too anxious to submit to be trained in these training ships preparatory to a sea life. I think that if a system of training ships, or training schools, in our various harbours and ports were established, in return for the Government grant, the State would have a right to lay down certain conditions just as in the Navy they make the parents on behalf of the children engage that the child shall serve ten years in the Navy. Why should not the State make the same rule with regard to training ships, and take the assent of the child by its signature, and compel the parents to agree that the child shall serve for ten years from the age of 18 in the Naval Reserve. I do not care for the one year service in the Navy; I do not care one straw for that; but bind them at eighteen years of age, and let them receive some small retainer,—a matter of detail, easily settled by the authorities. With that provision, and knowing that the shipowners would only be too anxious to get such lads, there would be no necessity for paying the shipowners a premium, but vast numbers of lads would be growing up for the Navy in the Naval Reserve. I do not agree with Mr. Shaw-Lefevre with regard to the number of men we should require in time of war. I am confident that ten times the number he stated would be required. It is absurd to think that 12,000 men would be sufficient to man the steamers and fight them, and scour the seas in time of war. 12,000 would be of no service whatever to fight the steamers when armed with guns (Mr. Lefevre said A.B.'s). I was surprised to find Mr. Brassey state—but I presume he has good foundation for the statement—that the number of foreign seamen has diminished. I thought that was one of the evils which led to the diminution of the rate of wages, because there was such a large element of foreigners in the service; but I am bound to accept his statement if he gives it. I can only speak practically. I live where seamen are constantly charged before me, as a magistrate, with mutiny and refusing to do duty on the high seas. Only last week a whole ship's crew of Greeks were charged before me with refusing to do duty, and there was not a single Englishman, except the officers, in the ship. It was the most difficult question I ever had to deal with in my life. There was not one man who could speak proper English, but there was one who could speak broken English, and that man had committed the greatest offence. If I had sent to Oxford to get a professor of Greek, he could not have understood them; but before charging the man who could speak the broken English, I spoke to him a few kind words in order to induce him to fall in with my views. I then swore him in as an interpreter, and made him interpret the evidence against the others, and interpret

their answers back to me. Then having heard the minor case, we heard the case against himself. That is a curious illustration, showing that our ships are often manned with foreign seamen, and it is a terrible condition for Captains to have such crews. However, I am only too thankful to Mr. Brassey and others who take up this question. Unfortunately we have not enough naval men in the House of Commons to take it up. That is the proper place in which to thrash it out, but some good may follow from discussions in this theatre, if those in authority will take notice of them.

Admiral OMMANNEY, C.B., F.R.S.: With regard to the employment of foreigners, I should like to mention one glaring instance that came before my observation last year. I took passage in a ship of a very influential company, which received a very large subsidy from the English Government. The crew of the ship, including stokers, numbered about 60 hands, every one of whom were either Italians or Greeks. On enquiry as to the reason for not employing British seamen, I was informed that the foreigners proved to be more sober.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—There must be an extraordinary apathy in the Merchant Service at the present time when year after year meetings of this sort are held, and but very rarely does a shipmaster from the Mercantile Marine come forward. I suppose the Mercantile Marine is demoralised by the presence of foreigners. For years I have been watching these things. Can you suppose there is any honest pride in the young Englishman of the present day in going into the Mercantile Marine, when they find confronting them in every grade of life a foreigner who is more often preferred because he will go cheaper, or appears to have manners less ferocious in independence than the Englishman, and is more suave? Do you suppose that boys will be recommended to go to sea by their parents, or counselled to do so by their friends, when they know this? No, Sir; I always say to boys, "Remember this, that so soon as ever you have made yourself fit and capable to be brought on to the quarter-deck, and go through your grades, in every grade that you go through, you will find yourself confronted with a foreigner who is equally esteemed, and in many cases by a low class of shipowners, much more esteemed than you are." It is a difficult question, but the difficulty began at the time that the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 was brought in. Those who brought in that Act might have looked down the vista of time and seen the whole of the alterations in the Statute Book as they now stand, as a necessary consequence of their beginning *de novo* without knowing what they were going to begin about. I want to say something about the status of the masters in merchant ships, because at the conclusion of the session of the House of Commons last year, Mr. Brassey made some allusion to bringing forward some measure to improve the status of shipmasters. Now I will ask, how are you going to improve the status of the shipmaster, *ab extra* or *ab intra*? You cannot do it *ab extra*, but you can do it *ab intra*, and almost by a stroke of the pen. I contend this, that the whole system of the education of Officers in the Mercantile Marine at the present moment is as thoroughly upside down as it would be possible for the ingenuity of a fiend to make it. It has been decided that we shall all pass examinations, but it has never been decided that we should be educated upon those first principles that make the education almost a matter of pastime,—of pastime almost to the youth, but certainly a pastime to the up-grown man. We are examined upon what? Upon rules? Do we know the reason of our rules? Do we know anything about spherical geometry? Do we know anything about plane geometry, or trigonometry? Can we tell the why and the wherefore, or the because, that lies at the back of the rule, and makes the rule a rule? You shall test it in this way. You shall collect the whole of those in this country who are engaged in teaching navigation, and you shall take the gentleman and examine him first, who is the inventor of the sphereograph and ask him how they set about the education of men? Thirty shillings is paid by a smart young fellow who thinks his arithmetic was pretty good when he was young. He is ground through the rules for second mate; he is coached over and over again, and he goes up and passes. For 10s. or 15s. more he can be ground at the end of another voyage for only mate; for 10s. or 20s., he can then get all the rules for passing for master; and then, at his leisure, he can go on grinding to pass his examination for Master; and, if you take him the day after he passes his examination for Master, and tell him, "I

"do not want any of these calculations worked out with those niceties that have been impressed upon you, but will you tell me the why and the wherefore that lies at the back of the rule, and makes the rule a rule," he cannot do so. Now boys learn that at the Blue Coat School. Last year I was down at the East End of London with two Officers belonging to one of the oldest and most honoured firms in this country. Naturally we began to talk on this subject, and we talked much in this way. The elder, the chief Officer, a splendid fellow, said, "There, if I had been educated like that man," pointing to the second Officer, "I should be ten times the man I am;" and he certainly looked all over a man. "But," he said, "the difference between us is this. He was educated at the Blue Coat School: he chose to go to sea; he got 25 guineas and a watch; and only the other day he went back to that school, after being away five years, and passed his examination with credit, and got 25 guineas more; but I was weaned upon rules, and brought up on rules, and now the whole effort of my life is to find out why the rule is a rule." As Mr. Lindsay says, in the fourth volume of his book, owners are sorely in want of men who have had their minds opened by education, so as to be fit and honourable representatives of them in foreign countries, and able to conduct their business properly; and one of the most difficult things that a shipmaster has to do in the present day, though he has taken his ship all round the world, is to sail through the difficulties that beset him. We have initiated training-ships for the seamen of all the world, and now we are going to initiate training ships for ourselves. That is upside down, and we say we are going to educate those boys as a matter of benevolence, when we ought to say, we are doing our duty to our neighbour as solemnly as we can that we may do our duty to our God. Whether it is better to have ships or training establishments on shore is a matter that will settle itself. What we want is to redeem these poor gutter-snipes who otherwise must go to prison for things which are regarded as crimes in them, but which are never mentioned in a well-behaved house. One half of them do not know better; but these are God's seedlings, and it is our business to educate them, and they will go by a natural process into the Mercantile Marine, or the Navy, or some other industry; but do you think it is rational to expect them and their parents to sit down and give a written obligation that at the end of a certain time they are going to pay you back by a number of years' service? Do you think you can ask any boy of 16 or 18 to make an agreement to pay back in time of service the value of the education he has got? Why, the very boys whom we get into the Navy at 18, when they come to man's estate, see perfectly well that the bargain, from their point of view, does not sit fair and square upon their shoulders, and they leave. How is the British Merchant Service going to afford you anything like a supply of seamen when that service does not rear its own? How do you suppose the British Mercantile Marine is going to thrive when there is such a large body of foreigners of all nations demoralising them? There was a time when this was a country; now it is a shop. Well, if that is the case, then abandon all these discussions; do not let us have any more meetings of this sort. Say what you are going to do, and do it. If the State, as I contend, has a right to the service of every man in the Merchant Service, let us have some sensible way of combining the two, no empirical ideas, nothing of that sort; but you will find that on board a merchant ship—and I, as a master of a merchant ship, know them fore and aft—our men have no sympathy with the Navy, because they are now a totally different class of men from those I lived with in the fore-castle in 1831 or 1835. There is no similarity at all. Why, on board the last ship but one I had, we could talk eight languages among 27 men; no matter what you said, or what language you used, so long as you gave the necessary pantomime. We have heard a good deal about provisions in the Merchant Service being bad, and I have seen a considerable quantity, and perhaps tasted it. I will ask you, how is it a thousand barrels of meat, condemned for the Royal Naval Service, are passed out through the ship chandlers, provision merchants, and so on, and find their way on board merchant ships? Only the other day, a young friend of mine told me that he was lying in Buenos Ayres, and, when the chief officer had gone ashore, they took the opportunity of calling alongside a gunboat there and asking the Commander to send a Lieutenant on board to examine their food, and the Lieutenant came on board and

condemned the whole of the stores, and it came out of one of Her Majesty's yards. Now, with regard to the question of apprenticeship, it is said that it is impossible to re-enact the law making apprenticeship compulsory, as though we could not take two steps backward with the view of making a bold spring forward. I do not see why every sailing ship should not be obliged to take a certain number of apprentices for a certain period, according to her tonnage. The difficulty is nothing if you will but do it; but if you go round about and talk all over this country about it, everybody has a private lion in their path, which they decline to go by on any consideration whatever, though they will go over and look at their neighbour's lion. There is another reason why foreigners ought not to be placed in command of our ships. A ship is an integral part of our Empire. The master is a man *under* authority; the Board of Trade sits pretty hard upon him; but he says to this man, "Go," and he goeth; and I say that such a man ought to be a son of the soil. I say that every foreigner whom you permit to stand under your flag, putting your laws in force against his ship's company, is occupying the place of a son of the soil; and in his place there is a son of the soil walking about who is disaffected by what passes around him, and he does not join the Royal Naval Service and make it that bully service which it ought to be. You have lost all the *esprit de corps* out of the Service, not because men are less honourable than they were 45 years ago when we swept the sea, but simply because you have done nothing at all to foster it, but everything deliberately to kill it. At this present moment the two services are separated, and one difficulty that you have is this: you do not hear the truth. You have Royal Commissions, and Special Commissions, and Committees, and you get all the most respectable men from all the great employs to give evidence. Now, you will find that the men in the American, the Canadian, the West Indian, the Pacific lines, know nothing about the Merchant Service. I was in command in the West Indian mail for some years, and in fulfilment of our duties in carrying out our daily walk in life, we hardly came in contact with anybody except our brother officers, and a class of passengers of the highest respectability, from whom we could learn by conversation at the table that which we never learned before. Such men have no sympathy for the Merchant Service, and they really do look down on the Merchant Service. I beg their pardon, they do not look down; they look over it. They do not know our wants, our troubles, and the difficulties that exist now between the master and the owner. We cease now to enjoy the confidence of our owners. The telegraph does all the work. We are but the bell-wether to take our ship across the sea and back again; but if we have to be the lawyer of our ships, to instruct counsel, and to do the whole thing from beginning to end, so as to be conscientious and good servants to our owners, there is the position of difficulty, and that is where we find that we are always behind hand. I do not presume to go into the question of the proportion of foreigners to Englishmen, but I can say this, that it is no use to introduce decimals into those proportions. Decimals do not belong to these things. We are practical men. One more or one less as the years vary one against the other, is not two chucks of a brass farthing in the argument. The Englishman is deteriorated; you cannot find him in the quality, you cannot find him in the physical stamina, and you cannot find him in the ability. In fact, what we used to call A.B.'s are gone out of the Merchant Service, because the Navy Reserve has got the *élite* of all the men, and, if you take all the best men out of all the steamers, who is going to lay out the coal to make all those steamers useful? There is a practical way of looking at these things, and, if we are to be fostered,—grand-mothered, I believe, is the proper phrase now,—pray let it be done in an out-and-out practical spirit.¹

¹ The present system of legislating for the *British Merchant Service* is the miserable system of working tide's works without even taking "*the young of the flood*" close in shore, and then standing boldly out and crossing the body of the flood stream so as to make "a tide and half tide," and so long as this style of legislating for the greatest industry in the world obtains, so long will all our difficulties continue to increase. We are in most critical position, the eyes of our competitors—of all the world—are upon us; and if we are not recalled from our present condition of fatuous and judicial delusion, the finale must be the entire collapse of this nation. Trade and

Lord ESLINGTON, M.P. : I will trespass, for a few moments, on a ground that will commend itself to the hearts of everybody here. If there is one feeling stronger than another in the breast of every Englishman, and I hope every Englishwoman also, it is that of justice, and I wish to be allowed to say one word in justice to foreign seamen, because I have this morning had an opportunity of conversing with a man who probably knows this subject as well as or better than any other man at this moment in England. I shall not mention any names, but some friends here, who know the shipping interest, will recognise whom I mean. He has been engaged in the port of Liverpool—a very good scene for such labours—upon a close inquiry, for four years, into the condition of the Merchant Service. Therefore, when I state him as my authority, it is no mean authority. Now, I am going to state a fact which he told me, which no doubt will startle a good many gentlemen here present. There are, making all deductions, not more than 40,000 able seamen in the Merchant Service of this country. Out of the 160,000 or 170,000 British seamen employed in ships clearing and entering British ports, there are not more than 40,000 A.B.'s that are *thoroughly able seamen*! And how many of those able seamen does this meeting suppose are foreigners? Not less than 15,000! That is a fact so remarkable that I think it will startle a great many persons who hear it. But let us follow that out a moment, and observe our position. First of all let me say, in justice to the foreigner whose character has been rather lightly spoken of to-day, that I am in a position to state, without fear of contradiction, that some of the best seamen in the Merchant Service at this moment—I say it as an Englishman, with sorrow, but with truth—are foreigners, and those men are drawn from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany. Now, we know that the character of those men is very like our own, and they improve upon our character, because they are more docile, and more obedient, and more loyal to their superiors. That is a remark that I believe is a correct one. But now look at the position that we should be placed in, supposing a sudden outbreak of war were to occur, and we have had bitter experience, not in this country, but in Europe, of what an outbreak of war means. It is a sudden and a sharp blow. Supposing a war, on any large scale, were to break out, we should probably lose at once something like 15,000 able seamen, because they are foreigners. Well, then, I come to the point my honourable friend has pressed upon us, and it is an official point which I have often heard in the House of Commons pressed, with some power and much authority, by persons in high official situations. They talk very much, and rather big, about having 12,000 Naval Reserve. Now, I want to ask any First Lord of the Admiralty, or anyone connected with the Admiralty, how many of those men do they suppose they can get on a sudden outbreak of war? I do not believe they would get more than one-third of those men. They might get 4,000, and think themselves very lucky if they got them. But then, if we are to lose something near to 15,000 able seamen—foreigners—and we are only to command, on a sudden outbreak of war, the services of 4,000 Naval Reserve men, why, our position is a very serious one. You have not got, to start with, above 40,000 altogether, and you have got the whole commerce of this country to carry on, and at the same time you have to form the first line of defence against any combination of naval power that you may have to meet. It is an extraordinary thing to me that we are asked to vote vast sums of money, year by year, and expensive schemes are presented to us of mobilization of forces, and formation of camps, and fortifications to lock up—God knows—how many thousands of our troops, but the question of our Naval Militia seems to me never to enter into the minds of our legislators. We have gone on, for years, upon Bonaparte's motto, which is the falsest in the world, "*Nous ne faisons rien, nous laissons faire.*" To trust the defence of these islands to such a maxim as that seems to me the height of folly. We must take

commence as a means to national strength, and by these the nation is to be maintained; but if the nation is to be legislated for, as if our sole ambition is to be a shop governed by a sliding and descending scale of *conventional honesty*, then our doom is already written. In conclusion, we have had and enjoyed the prestige of the past solely because we are the trustees of the future and yet unborn generations. What if we have betrayed this great National Trust?

some step for the comprehensive organization of our Naval Militia. I believe that is the first duty of our statesmen, but I have not the weight or authority to say what the exact form that it should take should be. I augur well, however, from the efforts of such men as my honourable friend, and these public discussions, which, I trust, will awaken the mind of the country to the vital importance of this subject. I will only ask leave to say one more word. We have heard a great deal about the demoralisation of the seamen. I have attended to this subject a good many years; I do not pretend to be an authority, because I have not the means of becoming so, but by constant attention you must learn something, and I do not believe that, in themselves, the seamen are one bit worse, but probably rather better, than they were; but there is a system of engaging and discharging seamen in this country which has been in practice for a long time, and which is most detrimental to discipline. I allude to the engagement of the crews at the shipping office, and I will tell, in two words, what I believe to be at the bottom of a good deal of that feeling, not of disloyalty, but of disrespect and disregard for their officers, which is fatal to discipline, and which is engendered and fostered by that system. The seamen are not often very highly educated men, or men of the world, although they travel a good deal, and they have a sort of idea in their minds that they owe a double allegiance, to the shipowner, in the first place, and to the shipping-master, who is a Board of Trade officer, in the next place. That system of engaging crews under the control and superintendence of the Board of Trade official, which the shipping-master really is, tends to produce that feeling, and tends, moreover, to prevent the master having the opportunity of making the acquaintance of his crew before he goes to sea. I believe that that is a most mischievous system for the country, because unless you can bring them into relationship with one another, it is impossible to expect that those cordial relations which should exist, will exist between them. They may form themselves in the course of a long voyage, but then there is a system pursued which is very destructive to discipline, and that is the recording of the offences and the reading them out from the log to the seamen, however petty the offences may be. That causes, in his mind a rankling feeling of antipathy to his officer, knowing that he will be punished or fined when he gets on shore. That is a very bad system. I won't detain you longer, but I think if this question of the shipping office is really looked into, you will find it was a very great mistake to supersede, even for the convenience afforded by the shipping-office, the old system of engaging the crews under the responsibility of the master, as he chose, some few days before the ship sailed.

Mr. CORRY: I do not intend to make any observations at this late stage of the proceedings, but I wish to propose that this very interesting discussion be adjourned. I think there are a great many gentlemen who would like to express their views on the subject. We have heard some very able speeches, and some very different expressions of opinion, and I think it might perhaps be an advantage if this subject were still further discussed. If it is the will of the meeting, I should move that this discussion be adjourned.

The motion having been seconded by Captain Pim, R.N., with Mr. Brassey's acquiescence, the meeting was adjourned to Thursday, 24th instant, at three o'clock.

The CHAIRMAN: Before we separate, I am sure you will join with me in thanking Mr. Brassey for his very interesting lecture.

ADJOURNED DISCUSSION.

Thursday, February 24th, 1876.

ADMIRAL SIR HASTINGS R. YELVERTON, G.C.B., in the Chair.

MR. CORRY: Sir Hastings Yelverton, Ladies, and Gentlemen: When I moved the adjournment of this debate, I was scarcely aware of the responsibility it devolved upon me, but still, as a practical shipowner and as one who has had considerable experience on the question before us, I may be allowed to make a few remarks. I have listened with very much pleasure indeed to Mr. Brassey's able, moderate, and suggestive paper, and with many of his suggestions I most heartily agree, yet to some I must take exception. Briefly alluding to some of the principal features of his paper, the first point that struck me was this, he rather doubted whether our sailors had deteriorated as a body. I think those who have had practical experience will admit that as a class they have deteriorated. I will not deny that, perhaps at the present time there are as many good sailors as there were twenty years ago, but there are certainly twice as many bad ones. Looking at the rapid progress of our trade, it was scarcely possible that the quality could have been kept up to the standard. Now, a great many reasons can be urged why sailors have deteriorated; one reason is that steamers employ a large number of seamen, but do not make sailors. Another reason is, our ships are now fitted in a different way to what they were years ago, in fact, the whole study of the shipowner is how to dispense with what we call skilled labour, that is to do as much work on deck as we can, and to render ourselves as much as possible independent of that skilled labour which we cannot always obtain. This answers the purpose to a certain extent, but when any emergency or any accident occurs we find ourselves at a great loss. Mr. Brassey referred to the fact that a fewer number of men were now employed to man a given amount of registered tonnage of shipping than formerly, and that this proved that the quality of the men cannot have deteriorated. This argument, however, falls through, when we consider that ships are now of a very much larger class than formerly, and require fewer men comparatively to man them. Apart from this, the superiority in fitting of the modern class of ship would fully account for the difference he refers to. While claiming that sailors are pretty much as they were formerly, he thinks, and we all think and hope, that some means may be devised for improving their condition, and a number of the suggestions he threw out are deserving of our best attention. He refers to the want of encouragement which has hitherto existed for any special exertion on the part of the sailor and the insufficiency of pay. He acknowledges that this last defect has been in a measure remedied, and that the pay is now as much in proportion as in other trades, especially taking into account the facilities of learning the trade, if you may call it one; it is scarcely so now, that is, there are so many who go into it, who have not gone through the preparatory training requisite to make good seamen. Mr. Brassey also referred to the advance notes. This is a very difficult question, and one which has had the careful attention of our General Shipowners' Committee, and is a subject on which I should like to say a few words. We all deplore the abuses which he described, but I think the remedy might be in many cases worse than the disease. It was not a shipowner's measure, it was designed purely for the benefit of the sailor. The shipowner would much prefer to give no advance, and would be willing to give higher wages to dispense with advance, but we find we cannot obtain sailors without it. Perhaps the most practical way would be gradually to reduce the amount from a month to half a month's advance, till the seamen are trained to more provident habits, as now they must have something to start with. Besides, if

THE SEAMEN OF THE COUNTRY.

you do not give an advance, you must introduce a very objectionable feature on board your ships, namely, the truck system, which has a great many abuses connected with it. However, I think the last defect to which Mr. Brassey referred, was the most important one, that is the want of systematic training for our sailors. The great bulk of our sailors are not trained, or at least the training is of such a slight character that you can scarcely call it training at all. After being perhaps a year and a half in a coaster, they join our ships as A.B.'s. Our captains, of course, know that these are not competent A.B.'s, but still they are all so much alike that it is difficult to discriminate among them, I will give you an instance in point. I had a ship of 1,800 tons lately arrive at Calcutta, the captain wrote to me with reference to her, and he said, "With regard to the crew, they are very willing and are fairly able to make and take in sail, but I can only find four or five men out of the whole crew competent to steer the ship." (She carries a crew of forty men, all told.) Now this ship is remarkably easily steered and has all the best appliances for steering. This will show you that the quality is certainly not what we would like to see. One of the remedies Mr. Brassey proposes is the classification of seamen. This, at first sight, looks very well indeed, but I think, as was pointed out at the last meeting, it opens up a very dangerous question, that is the question of Trades' Unions, and all who have had experience of Trades' Unions, would be very sorry to see anything of the kind introduced at sea. We have enough of discomforts and annoyances without having this system introduced in our ships. We can very well understand, if the ships were ready for sea, the Trades' Unions might have it in their power to stop the ship and make their own terms, and therefore, while it looks well, the dangers are so great that shipowners as a body would fight shy of it. With regard to discharge, the discharge note should be a certificate of classification and our captains are to blame that it is not more so. Of course my one will take seamen who have good discharges for a number of years, and some captains will only take men who have good discharges, and I think this is the right track to go on. If a man cannot produce a discharge it is a sure sign that there is something wrong about him. I have a case in point. I had a ship which lately went down to Gravesend with one of the crew deficient, and I was surprised to find the captain refusing to ship a powerful looking man who presented himself, simply because he had no discharge. The consequence was he had to take two, because the men who had discharges were not up to the mark in *physique*.

A suggestion was thrown out by Mr. Brassey that we should retain picked seamen while in port. I think that is scarcely practicable, at least in sailing ships after long voyages. I know that while in port they won't stay with us, and if they join a week or two before the time, as we sometimes allow them to do, they are comparatively useless, as the deck men, who are trades unionists, will not work with them. Another point he brought out was the personal intercourse of the owners with the seamen. Now, I cannot see very well how that can be accomplished. We, of course, as he well knows, do not take cruises with our ships, and the only intercourses we may have is in occasionally going down to Gravesend, when I do not think, as a rule, the men are in a fit state for social intercourse. We now come to the important question of training ships. This is a question occupying a great deal of public attention and a great deal of shipowners' attention. It is regarded by many as a panacea for all the evils connected with our seamen, and many philanthropists look upon it as combining two very desirable objects, viz., getting rid of a dangerous class of our rising population and making them worthy members of society. I do not altogether agree that it is a panacea for all the evils, but I believe it has many good features, and therefore should be encouraged. Unfortunately the great bulk of those who are at present in our training ships, are not the class of boys we would select as our apprentices to make seamen of. I would much prefer a few lads brought up on the coast or in the country, to any number of these waifs of society: in fact you can scarcely expect that they will turn out anything but indifferently. Their early training and influences have been certainly not of the best character. If a better class of boys can be induced to join, the result would no doubt be different. I think, moreover, it is a very artificial system. Comparatively little training can be done on shore. If you wish to train a boy you must send him to sea, and I would suggest that proper cruises should be fitted out merely for the

purpose of instructing these boys. First they would require a certain amount of training on shore and then be transferred to these special cruisers, for the purpose of teaching them something of their duties at sea. I do not think Mr. Brassey's plan for subsidizing owners carrying apprentices would work; I do not think we would like to be so subsidized. We do not require this artificial help. We do carry apprentices, all the large shipowners do carry apprentices, and many not only carry them without premiums but give premiums instead of receiving them. I may say, in answer to some remarks made by gentlemen who spoke at the last meeting about foreigners, and especially foreign Officers having the preference, that four or five of our present captains served their time in our employ, and all the others have been Officers with us, so that we do not forsake those who have served us. We take apprentices really with the object of making our Officers; it is not with the idea of making sailors, they are of too high a class for that. You cannot well combine the two classes, you cannot take apprentices and ordinaries or training-ship boys together, because, as in our own practice, if we take apprentices we must have all the rest A.B.'s, as we find when we do ship all A.B.'s, that there are a great many very ordinary ones among them. With regard to the pension fund for mising the status of seamen, I think that is a very desirable object, but you will not get Jack to subscribe to it. If it is done at all, I have no hesitation in saying it will be done at the expense of the shipowner, that is, whatever is put into the Pension Fund will be practically a tax on the shipowners over and above the wages. The men will not be mulcted of their wages for any such object. The foreign element has been alluded to several times in this debate, and we cannot very well dispense with it. A great many of these foreigners are the best seamen we can get, all, in fact, from the northern coasts (Norway, Sweden, and Denmark) are the best and the most trustworthy men. In fact, we make sure that if such men sign articles, they will come on board sober and fit for their duties, and, therefore, we give them the preference. We do not care for any southerners, as we find that they are not so trustworthy nor such competent seamen. The northern men, as a rule, are steady, sober, and very attentive to their duties, and are trained seamen; brought up from boyhood along their coasts, they are really our very best men and we would certainly miss them. Lord Eslington made a very telling remark when he referred to what would occur if all these 12,000 foreigners had to be dispersed in the event of a war. Now, I think the practical effect would be, that that would not occur. The sailors of any particular nation with which we were at war would perhaps leave our employ, but the bulk would stay where they were. Mr. Brassey referred, with much feeling, to the dangers and temptations that beset the sailor. We all acknowledge that, and have to make great allowances, and no one can think of these dangers and temptations to which the sailor is subject, without having his sympathies roused in his behalf and allowing very large latitude for his misdemeanors.

Mr. STIRLING LACON: Sir Hastings Yelverton, I rise at this early period of the discussion to ask your permission to read a statement which appeared in the *Shipping Gazette* of last evening. You are aware that delegates are now sitting in London from all the ports of the United Kingdom, I think as many as fifty, and this statement has been prepared in order that it may be submitted simultaneously to them and to this meeting. It contains a distinct proposition, because in reading the paper of the Honourable Member, I am at a loss to know what his proposition is, or in fact what is at this moment the proposition before this meeting. I do not agree with the Honourable Member with regard to seamen's pensions and seamen's funds. The thing has been tried over and over again, and what between the maladministration of these funds, and a variety of causes, the funds are squandered, and seldom get into the hands of those for whose benefit the fund was established. At the latter part of this statement, when I allude to the employment of the young Officers of the Navy, I believe I shall adduce facts which perhaps will rather surprise you. Since the last meeting I have been among shipowners. They had heard of our very satisfactory meeting here on Friday, and they asked me, "Who are you, and what are you?"—of course alluding to the Institution. "What is your constitution, and who are your members?" But when I told them that the discussions in this theatre were open to all comers, they said that they were very glad to hear such opinions, and especially were they desirous of hearing the opinions of

naval Officers; and even should this discussion involve another adjournment, they hoped that another adjournment would take place, in order that the subject might be thoroughly thrashed out. Now, Sir, the course which I wish to pursue is to read the following communication which I furnished to the *Shipping Gazette*, and it is headed "The Supply of Seamen:"—

"When the controversial points in connection with our Mercantile Marine are in a fair way of settlement, this subject (the supply of Seamen) will remain, and must become paramount, for it involves not only the well-being of our Mercantile Marine, but also the prospective defence of the country. No subject, said Lord Eslington, in his speech of this day at the Royal United Service Institution, is of more importance to the country, and no subject has been more thoroughly neglected. When the deputation of shipowners waited upon Mr. Disraeli a short time ago, if, instead of a series of resolutions, they had come with, say 6d. a ton in their hands, the Premier would probably have said to them, 'Did I not tell you, gentlemen, that you were masters of the position, and now that we understand each other we can work together, and see whether something cannot now be done for your benefit as well as for the good of the country, for Parliament has reported that there ought to be a greater interchange between the Royal Navy and the Mercantile Marine. But no words of an Act of Parliament, nor action of the Government, will put things right in a day. If an evil has been for years accumulating upon us, it may take years of hearty unanimity to get things back into a healthy condition. Above all, gentlemen, you must re-establish the old relation of master and servant, and you must take care that your servants are not driven into the coal mines and workshops of England. The days are gone by, let us hope, when they will be sent to gad with hard labour for refusing to go to sea in unseaworthy ships at the risk of their lives; while others of them have left the sea, and have not waited for such tender treatment.' Five years ago, by returns from Liverpool, it appeared that nearly 70 per cent. of the shipowners were in favour of compulsory apprenticeship; and within the last few days I am informed, upon high authority, that they are now all but unanimous on the subject. But compulsory apprenticeship would in these days be met by arguments and obstacles which would be fatal when it was brought before the Legislature. The problem is this: the boys of the country cannot get to sea, and the boy is father of the man, and it is most important in this great maritime country that we should have trained men (putting aside in these days of steam the old term 'sailor') with sea legs and sea stomachs, and a readiness of resource in moments of emergency and danger, which no landsman can either appreciate or understand, and which can only be acquired at sea when young. The word 'compulsory' has, as applied to this question, this meaning—that all should be equally weighted, for what is obligatory upon all would be a hard-ship upon none; and the same argument would apply to our competition with foreigners, who, equally with ourselves, must bring up their own boys. Assuming a tax of 6d. a-ton is imposed, those shipowners who take boys ought to have the tax remitted, or be paid an annual sum for each boy from the general fund. What that sum shall be must be a matter of detail, but it must be made the interest of the shipowner to take boys, or, at least, that he shall not be in a worse position than his neighbour by so doing; all such boys at the age of 18—not obligatory, nor unless they shall so elect—to receive 12 or 18 months' training and education at the expense of the country, partly in such sea-going training ships as may be available, and partly in Naval barracks (great stress has been laid upon this, in order that they may receive such training and discipline on shore as is given in France, Germany, and Russia and which cannot be acquired on board-ship); at the expiration of the training, every man to be his own master, and henceforth free to earn his own livelihood, some by volunteering for the Navy, and the rest entering the Merchant Service; no future retaining fee, training money, or pension, the accumulating consequences of which are so serious, that Mr. Goschen said he would take an early opportunity of bringing the subject before the House, which he never did. In the course of time we should have a large body of trained men in the country, with the aforesaid sea legs and sea stomachs, and, in the event of war, the country is rich enough to engage them at war wages; the question of pay during the time of

"training, in order to make the system attractive, being matter of detail; and such
 "pay at the end of the training would form a small fund for each man to begin with,
 "when he sets up for himself and enters the labour market. Eventually it might be
 "found that we might get rid of the present system of training boys exclusively for
 "the Navy at a cost of £60 per boy, as compared with £19 per boy in the ordinary
 "training ships. Moreover, the Navy find great difficulty and inconvenience in em-
 "ploying the number of boys they are obliged to rear (3,000 annually): they are too
 "good, said Sir Rodney Mundy, and he would rather have a practical seaman before
 "the mast than one who could work a double altitude. I am no advocate for
 "pensions for seamen any more than I am for pensions in any other relation of life.
 "By the scheme now proposed, a man under twenty years of age is enabled to make a
 "fair start in life as a skilled labourer, and we want to make him a reasonable being,
 "careful and provident, and it must rest with him whether he will provide for him-
 "self in his old age or take his chance of the workhouse. Instead of retiring our
 "young Officers, even Sub-Lieutenants, wholesale from the Navy, as is now done at
 "great expense to the country, surely means might be devised by which shipowners
 "might be induced to employ them during peace, as is done in France, Germany, and
 "Russia, and thus enable them to acquire and keep up a practical knowledge of their
 "profession, and gradually to supplant the 1,630 foreign Officers, 968 of whom are
 "Captains in command of English ships! who, according to a Parliamentary return
 "of last session, are employed and have obtained certificates in the British Mercantile
 "Marine since 1860. Until recently one Englishman was in command of a German
 "ship, but he has been removed by an order of the German Government. In future,
 "none but Germans are to command German ships. Surely there is something very
 "short-sighted in all this—968 foreign Captains sailing in command of English ships
 "under the English flag when our own Officers are seeking employment! There
 "have been 4,000 applications for Plimsoll Inspectorships! Is not an Englishman,
 "when freed from Government interference and certificate, as good as any foreigner?
 "Might not foreigners, in the event of war, without waiting for an embargo, quietly
 "sail off with their respective charges to seek refuge in their own ports?"

Science has led us a pretty dance with regard to ironclads and 81-ton guns, but
 is not the improvement of our *personnel* of more vital importance? Ships and
 guns, wood and iron, won't fight without the gallant hearts to man them.

Captain BEDFORD PIER, R.N., M.P.: The question before us is—"How best to
 "improve and keep up the seamen of the country?" I, for one, feel very strongly
 that there is no question at all to compare with this in importance. It is the most
 serious question of the day. I take a very great interest indeed in the matter, both
 from a national and a personal point of view. In early life I went to sea in the
 merchant service, and have been more or less closely in contact with the merchant
 service ever since. At this moment I am counsel to a large body of English seamen
 at the east end of London. The London Mutual Seamen's Protection Society—the
 largest society, I believe, in the kingdom, with a number of men affiliated to it in
 the northern ports. I propose, in the first place, to put before the meeting, as
 briefly as possible, the state and condition of the Mercantile Marine. The number
 of men in the Mercantile Marine at the present moment, according to the Board of
 Trade returns, is 200,000. Of this, not more than one-third, or 70,000, are blue
 jacks; the rest are all sorts of men, picked up anywhere, stokers, cooks, and the
 like. Of these 70,000 more than 50,000 are foreigners. This is a most serious
 affair—50,000 of these 70,000 are foreigners. Now we possess in the Mercantile
 Marine at least 22,000 ships, so that if you put on one side the decimals of my
 friend, Mr. Brassey, you have about one real English blue jacket to each merchant
 ship. When a man comes to a shipping-office, and his name is called over, he may
 be registered under any name he likes, there is no necessity for him even to open his
 mouth, and it is quite impossible for the shipping-master to know whether he is a
 foreigner or an Englishman. On that account the Board of Trade returns are per-
 fectly valueless in the matter of discriminating between natives and foreigners.
 Mr. Brassey told us the proportion of foreigners to British seamen stood at 10:87.
 I am very sorry to be obliged to contradict him, but I know practically from many
 ships passing through my borough, and having a great deal of information about
 them, that the crews of British ships are composed on an average of three-fourths

of foreigners—at least it is so with the ships passing Gravesend. I have known ships myself going to sea with absolutely every one of the crew on board a foreigner, from the Captain downwards. Why the case of the English ship "Lennie," still going on, must be familiar to all, the three murdered men were the only English on board. Last year I obtained a return in the House of Commons, and I think the figures are perfectly dreadful for any Englishman to read,—“Foreign masters, 968; “foreign mates, 595; foreign engineers, 77;” total, 1,630 foreigners in the position of Officers in the British Mercantile Marine, taking ships over the world under the British flag. I ask, where would ships so commanded and officered go in time of war? I do not hesitate to say if, in event of war, we had to collect all the British seamen in the Mercantile Marine, we could not collect more than 20,000 men. I am perfectly satisfied you would be unable to get 20,000 real British seamen, and that would, *malgré* the decimials of my friend, Mr. Brassey, be rather less than one for every British ship. With regard to the Mercantile Marine being a feeder of our Service, the Royal Navy, in the present day, I am afraid that is an idea about as fallacious as the idea that we have a large supply of seamen. We find, by a return, that the number of merchant seamen who entered the Royal Navy in 1873 was 382, and that there were more than 800 deserters. Last year we find that less than 200 seamen entered the Royal Navy, and 1,100 deserted. Mr. Brassey is quite right in saying, there are no less than 16,000 men “waste” in the Mercantile Marine per annum. It is a very sad thing, but there is no doubt the calculation has been made most carefully. I see a gentleman here, not far from me, who is well able to verify this calculation. 16,000 is a frightful waste in this Mercantile Marine of ours, and how is this to be filled up? Taking every boy that you can possibly “scare up” out of the training-ships, you cannot send to sea more than 1,000 at the very outside. The apprenticeship system yields us about 4,500; If my memory is right, in 1845 we had about 16,000 apprentices, while last year there were only 4,500. Adding those to the 1,000 boys from the training-ships, which is far in excess of the mark, you have 5,500 to fill up a gap of 16,000. How do you fill up that gap? Why, with foreigners, or with the outcasts of our own country. Mr. Corry is not the only owner whose captains write home to complain that out of their crew they have only four men who can take the helm. I have known ships of 1,800 tons go to sea with only two men on board who could take the helm. Altogether there is no doubt the present condition of the Mercantile Marine, viewed from that aspect, is as deplorable as it is possible to conceive. I will now touch slightly upon the reasons which, in my humble judgment, have caused this deplorable condition of the Mercantile Marine. In the first place, we do not train any boys at all. In this country, we have 100,000 pauper-boys, under sixteen years of age, more or less on the high road to become criminals, and we have 100,000 boys, the sons of parents who are so poor that they are next door to paupers. Now, you could not by any possibility have a finer material to bring up for seamen. Look at the institution, of which I think the gallant Admiral near me is one of the visiting justices at Feltham; look at the way in which the boys of the county of Middlesex are there trained. If that sort of institution were established all over the country, see how easy it would be to turn out 20,000 good boys every year, to fill up the gap in our Mercantile Marine, if Englishmen would only put their shoulder to the wheel! We want at least 20,000 boys, trained for sea every year, and it could be done with the greatest possible ease. Another reason for this deplorable condition of the Mercantile Marine is the really wretched life that the men live on board ship. As a rule, I do not consider that the merchant seaman is at all properly fed. I do not consider that he is well treated, and I should like to read to you a petition drawn up by the seamen themselves, and presented by me to Parliament last week. The petition is to this effect:—“That your petitioners, British seamen, employed in the British Mercantile Marine, are subject to great disadvantages, by reason of the extensive employment of unqualified foreigners, and other serious drawbacks, which can only be remedied by practical legislation administered by a responsible head.”

This is a petition drawn up by the seamen themselves, and one almost in identically the same words was presented by me the session before last; so that you see it is not all a new thing. These men have considered their case very carefully

indeed. They have put it down in black and white, and I think it is an admirable answer to my friend Mr. Brassey's question, as to "How best to improve and keep up the number of seamen of the country," because the men here speak their own words on the matter. With respect to the nature of the ships themselves, that also has been a fruitful source of the men leaving the Mercantile Marine. There is hardly an employment on shore for which a sailor is not fitted, for we must all admit that the sailor is a very handy man. One of the best merchant seamen I ever met is a man I have picked up, and is now my under gardener, and he can do almost anything. There is no doubt whatever that these men can get employment on shore, and there is no doubt whatever the reason they leave the Merchant Service is because it is in such a condition that a good man won't stop. To my certain knowledge, in the group of collieries round about Shields, there are no less than 400 English seamen working under ground at this moment, all ready to answer the beck and call of the mother institution, the Mutual Seamen's Protection Society in London. I believe they would come forward in the event of a war directly, but at the present moment they are earning a living in the bowels of the earth in preference to going to sea. I have taken the opportunity of bringing down a little model with me, to show one reason why seamen do not care to go to sea in the ships of the present day. The new-fashioned ships of the present day are altogether unlike what we used to know and love so much when I was a young man. That (taking up the model) is the shape of the ship, three and a-half or four times her beam, in which we went to sea when we were young. Thirty odd years ago, when I went to sea, we had *more* ships than we have at the present moment. I admit we have more tonnage now, but we have a less number of ships. No doubt we have a much larger tonnage now, but we had more ships then. And did we ever hear of collisions coming into court in those days? Why, I have been amongst 300 ships in the Chops of the Channel, and if we collided with another ship we swore a little, but the damaged ship was patched up by those on board, and away we went. We never went into court and made a fuss about it as we do now. The vice of the matter is simply this: the shipowner who has an old-fashioned steamer cuts her in half amidships, adds about half her length, and so produces the ship of the present day (holding up the model), showing 10 times the beam for length. When you come to look at it, it is really no laughing matter. That long ship has of course to seek her displacement; she is 300 feet long by 30. Suppose she is between two Atlantic waves (illustrated by model), she has to seek her displacement, and down she goes between the waves, the result being that the sea fills inboard over her stem and her stern at the same time. There is no doubt the "London" went down through that, and there is no doubt that the 200 odd steamers which have vanished in the last year highly classed—for we lose four ships a day in this country—of these there is no doubt that at least 200, with ten times their beam for length, have been lost simply in seeking their displacement, a big wave coming over the bow and stern at the same moment, or swamping them amidships. That is one reason why men won't go to sea in a merchant ship. It is perfectly clear that this ship is built to go through the waves, and not to go over the waves, and the consequence is the man knows what it is not to have a dry shred upon him, or any of his clothes dry down below. You cannot expect them to stand that if they can get employment on shore which will give them bread and cheese. Last year I read a paper on this subject at the Society of Arts, and I will just read to you the remedy I proposed, because it is no use to enter upon a loud growl and not to suggest something to be done to remedy these fearful evils. The remedy I proposed last year was simply this:—First, a responsible head of the Mercantile Marine. Secondly, a maritime Lord Campbell's Act. I am perfectly certain if the owner of a ship had to see that his ship went to sea perfectly found and fitted, you would not want Mr. Plimsoll's services any longer. The owner would take precious good care not to run the risk of an action brought against him for the loss of the life of any one on board. Thirdly, I propose a Mercantile Marine Medical Service, not merely for the medical examination of seamen, but a hospital for the men to go to when they are sick. Go to the United States. Look at their sea-ports, and you will see magnificent hospital accommodation for the merchant seamen of that country. We are the only nation of the world where there is no hospital accommo-

dation for our men. There are no less than 40 beds empty at Greenwich, which cannot be filled. No applicants can go into those beds, and why? Because they have not got money enough to carry it on, and here we have thousands of ship-owners, immensely wealthy men, merchant princes in this country, who cannot come down with the necessary sum to provide for the poor wretched seamen who obtain their wealth for them. Forty beds in the "Dreadnought" Hospital empty for want of funds!! It is indeed disgraceful. The fourth suggestion was training schools in every county and training ships attached, boys apprenticed, their lives insured, with pensions assured, after a certain number of years' service, by a most simple process, by insuring their lives or giving them a deferred pension from the Post Office Savings Bank, so that it would be entirely under Government control, at once a very different affair to the proposition of my friend Mr. Brassey, and there would be no fear whatever of it collapsing, as the wretched fun I did that we had before. I was one of the subscribers in early life, and of course lost my money. And, lastly, in reference to the ship I have just described to you, I suggest an honest tonnage law, with taxation removed from the ship to the cargo; an "honest tonnage law," I say, because our tonnage law, at the present moment, is simply dishonest.

Captain Pim concluded by introducing his friend Dr. Ward, M.P. for Galway, who wished to say a few words on the medical aspect of the case.

Dr. WARD, M.P.: I did not intend to address the meeting until Captain Pim requested me to say a few words. I came rather to hear the views of Naval Officers on this very important question, for we cannot always depend upon what we hear in the House of Commons, at least, as far as the sailors are concerned. I think, however, there are a few remarks which I may make from a medical point of view, which, if the people interested in this question would take up, might lead to some useful legislation. Last week I had the opportunity of asking the President of the Board of Trade in the House a question with reference to scurvy, and his answer was certainly most remarkable. He stated the great regret he had in saying that scurvy was on a very considerable increase in the Mercantile Marine in this country, and, considering the advances that have been made in medical science, and the great ease of prevention of this terrible scourge to seamen, I think it is a disgrace to the country that the President of the Board of Trade had to come forward with such a statement as that. The question comes, How is it to be avoided? I believe one of the suggestions of Captain Pim would do a great deal towards it—the medical inspection of stores. When thinking over this subject I certainly was most surprised to find that Her Majesty's Navy is engaged in what I cannot but regard as a disreputable line of conduct. I find it is the habit when Her Majesty's ships come into port and their beef is not in very good condition, not to destroy it, but to sell it to brokers, who re-sell it to the merchant ships. I understand, indeed, that they take some of the bad pieces out of the barrels, but we all know when meat is in contact with bad meat, packed up for months, it is in a very doubtful condition indeed. I understand that this is the case on very fair evidence, and I believe we shall have a return shortly of the amount of this meat thus sold, and I believe also the name of the principal broker who buys it, which will be rather useful information. Then there is another point. I quite agree with my friend Captain Pim that medical inspection of stores ought to be a *sine quid non*, but there comes the more difficult question of the medical inspection of seamen themselves. I am not prepared to go the whole way with him, though I think there is a great deal in what he says; but I do think it is not at all a creditable state of things for this great mercantile country to stand almost alone without any direct hospital provisions or medical attendance for seamen. I believe if the friends of seamen would urge this upon the House,—it is not a contested point, and it is not a question of foreigners or able-bodied seamen,—I think no one could object to medical provision for the sailor, whether he be an able-bodied seaman or a foreigner, because we at least want him in good health to do his work. I think if the friends of seamen, and the shipowners themselves, who are very much interested, would urge these matters in the Bill, which does not make one single provision for them, they would very easily carry either the amendments of Captain Pim, or something equivalent to them.

Captain J. C. WILSON, R.N. : Unfortunately I was not here at the beginning of this lecture, and I have only been able to take a cursory glance of the discussion which took place at the former meeting. I should like to begin by asking the honourable lecturer a question which will clear away a great deal of difficulty. Can he tell us how many of the 202,000 merchant seamen are really *bonâ fide* blue-jackets? because, if we can get at those figures, we shall be in a position to argue the point clearly and with some benefit. Before I came here, I looked at an old Nautical Dictionary of 1815, and found the definition of the word "seaman" there given, to imply a man who had been brought up to the sea, in contradistinction to a "landsman," a man who had not been brought up to service at sea. I fancy a great number of people included in the appellation "seamen" really are not even "lands-men," but "shore men."

Mr. BRASSEY : I think I know a gentleman in this room who can tell me. Mr. Williamson, can you tell me what was your calculation of the number of firemen and stewards?

Mr. WILLIAMSON : I had a communication from the Registrar-General of Seamen on the point, and he gave the following figures:—About 202,000 men, so called, in the British Mercantile Marine; the total number, 202,000, embraces stokers, firemen, stewards, cooks in steamers, as well as stewards and cooks in steerage. I deduct 10 per cent. from the number of men in sailing ships, 130,000, that gives 87,000 hands in sailing ships, including ordinaries, A.B.'s, and foreigners. In steamers there are 71,000 hands; take 50 per cent. off, that gives you 35,000 seamen, making altogether 150,000 in round numbers as the seamen hands.

Captain WILSON : Now we have arrived at something definite; instead of having 202,000 seamen we have only 150,000 blue jackets, as they are called in Parliamentary phraseology, and out of those 150,000 men we may, I think, taking our naval experience because we can have nothing better, estimate that about 50,000 of those are landsmen,¹ about 50,000 are ordinaries, and possibly 50,000 are able seamen. Now from a conversation I had with Mr. Shaw Lefevre the other day, I was somewhat shaken in an opinion which I think the honourable lecturer will remember I conveyed some years ago indirectly to him, that we had then not more than 25,000 *able seamen*, which I still maintain is the right class to estimate the seamen power of your Fleet by, whether merchant or naval. The test is the number of able-bodied men you have, because you can make a cab-driver, or anyone else into a blue-jacket to-morrow; and the term "blue-jackets" is simply an evasion of the question. We know that First Lords when in difficulties about men enter a number of novices, or any trash they can get, and go and tell Parliament they have so many sailors; "blue jackets" they may be, but they are not seamen. In the Merchant Service we have, say 50,000 able seamen, and I see Lord Eslington, the other day, said that out of those at least 15,000 were foreigners, and were prime seamen; I think it most natural it should be so because if they were not prime seamen they would not as it were turn out our own men. Therefore I think it is pretty clear that in the whole of the British mercantile marine, the first mercantile marine of the world, monopolising the bulk of the trade of the world, the whole number of able-bodied skilled sailors, is only about 35,000; that is putting it at the very utmost we can possibly estimate. Supposing 50,000 able-bodied men are enough to carry on the trade of this country, we know from the Royal Navy that to keep up the number of 50,000 able seamen, we should require 15,000 boys a year, and to keep up 10,000 or 11,000 able seamen in the Royal Navy it at present requires 3,000 boys a year, therefore if we require 50,000 men for the Merchant Service we may fairly conclude that as the loss in the Navy is not greater than in the Merchant Service, we should therefore want 15,000 boys annually to make good the waste on the 50,000 able seamen. Had the apprenticeship system continued in force, and the apprentices been carried as they were in former times, according to tonnage, we should have had, at present, about 59,000 apprentices,—an extraordinary large number,—or if calculated according to the

¹ "Landsman" is a rating given to men who are not qualified for that of "ordinary." In the Navy the rating has been changed to ordinary second-class.

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

and the boys trained in the Royal Navy, including pay, a free kit, and the dozen and one things we give them, cost somewhat under £10 per year. I made a little calculation the other day, and I am perfectly certain of this,—if you can put the boys into properly organised training ships, with sufficient supervision and properly conducted, making due allowance for all expenses, you could train them for from £28 to £30 a year a head, and one year is ample. Allowing for paying a premium for sending light-made boys to sea, say £10,—from £38 to £40 a head—you could turn out very good, and well trained boys, the bulk of whom would be received gladly on board your merchant ships, and who would be from the first able to earn at any rate their food, if not their wage. These are the style of lads we ought to turn out; they should be respectable and physically sound, able lads. None should be taken under fifteen, and none kept more than a year, for there is a great deal of sentiment about sea service, and if you keep a boy too long in a training ship you send him to sea with all the spunk gone out of him. He is like a bottle of champagne that has been uncorked too long, there is no sparkle left, and the chances are ten to one that he deserts the first opportunity. These are my views about boys.

I touched upon the question of a third class reserve. It is a very serious thing for one to differ with his superiors, and perhaps it is a great piece of impertinence on my part to do so, but I cannot understand their making it a *sine quâ non*, that a boy should have two years' training, when one is ample, and offering £25 for what they know must cost at least £50. The third class reserve is a mistake. It is a matter of no importance to the Admiralty or the country where the men for the reserve come from. Let us draw our reserve from the best merchant seamen who present themselves, let us put as it were, into the sea the spawn, and let us draw from sea the fish, but have nothing to do with them in the meantime. Let the men come from any source, you know that to keep up the number of men in your reserve you owe the Merchant Service so many thousands of boys; put them, therefore, into the Merchant Service and draw out your full-grown sailor as you require or can get him. I can see no better plan than the one I advocated in this theatre myself for improving the royal seamen and the reserve, whilst at the same time linking the Merchant Service with the Royal Navy, which I think, is a most important matter for the country. I cannot understand how we are to expect, in time of war, that you are going to utilize your Naval Reserve men, brought up as at present with totally different ideas,—men who know nothing whatever of your ships or discipline, who, as was once said by a gallant Admiral, never have seen anything of a man-of-war but their outside; how are you going to get these men to work harmoniously with your continuous service men, a totally different class? they are perfectly distinct classes; the merchant seamen will be placed under men-of-war's men who have different sympathies and ideas, and if they work well together for the benefit of the service, it will be a perfect miracle. But the case would be very different if we took steps to link the two together. I want to see class prejudice broken down. I think Mr. Donald Currie told us in the last discussion the Merchant Service objected to Naval Officers, and another gentleman told us that there was no sympathy between the merchant sailor and the man-of-war's man. That I have always held to be the case, and I said so in this theatre some time ago. I knew it to be the case, and I think it is a very great pity it should be so, and the first way to break down such a dangerous feeling is to carry out the system I proposed before; that there should be an interchangeableness between the two services. I do not believe in this tremendous deterioration of merchant seamen, or the impossibility of getting the small number of men we should require; I believe there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, though the number may be less; I believe we have a certain percentage of thoroughly able men in the merchant service, and no person who knows anything about seamen will expect that every man

fine well-trained respectable lads. They are never kept more than a year under training, or entered under 15 years of age. They cost about £25 each to train. I am also informed that the "Chichester's" and "Arethusa's" boys are not kept more than one year under training, but I have seen less of them than the others.

who goes to sea will turn out a good sailor, to be so, he must have the natural instincts and qualities of a sailor, to make him a good one, and these are only developed and brought forward by the work he has to do, but must be innate in the man, and to expect that you are going to make an ideal seaman, one of those first-rate fellows we remember, and who is treasured in our minds as our standard sailor, out of every *lad* that joins your ship, is to expect too much, it can never be so: what we want is a certain number of leading men; certain men to act as the arrow's point when it comes to emergency, to lead the others who will when thus headed do the work; a few such men are necessary and invaluable everywhere. I would bring into the Navy a certain number of young sailors from the Merchant Service, passing them in through barracks. I would reduce the continuous service men and make up the remainder of our 20,000 seamen with the non-continuous service men. These men should pass from the Navy into the reserve and returning from time to time as it suited them to come, and us to receive them. In the reserve their time should count in certain proportions which I gave before, that is in the proportion of three years in the reserve to two in the Navy, and whenever they had made up in and out of the Navy their twenty-one years' service, they should be entitled to a short service pension.

As to the question of the pay of seamen I do not know what it may be in the Merchant Service; but looking into an old book of 1815, I find the pay of petty Officers in the Royal Navy was then 46*s.* a month, while at present it is 53*s.*; A.B.'s 36*s.* 3*d.*; it is now 40*s.* 7*d.* Considering that is sixty years ago I do not think the increase of the pay has kept pace with the times; and if the same style of thing obtains in the Merchant Service, I can only say it is no wonder you do not get good men. We are certainly told that seamen and Officers in the Merchant Service are not properly paid. The reason of this is *insurance*. If you had no insurance, both seamen and Officers would be better remunerated; as a proof of that it is a well known fact that in all the large companies where the vessels are not insured, the Officers and men are of a superior stamp, and are invariably better paid. That is the root of the whole question.¹

Now we come to the last point—the interchange of Officers. I ventured, and I think I was one of the first to venture upon it, to say it would be a good thing for the Navy if we took Naval Reserve Officers for a certain period into the Royal Service. I want to see a sympathy and interchange between the two Services. We have not to look very far to see the advantage of so doing. We know the old fable of the bundle of sticks, if we are united and hang together we can carry everything before us; but why are we so powerless for good in the Royal Navy, and why are the seamen in the Merchant Service so helpless? I am putting the shipowners on one side, and am speaking of the men “who go down to the sea in ships.” Simply and entirely because there is no unity between us. Let us be united by every means in our power. Why in this great maritime country do we find that twenty-six millions are spent annually upon the Army in England and India, and only a bare ten millions on the Navy, and still the Navy is called the first line of defence? In the first place the Army is a powerful, rich corporation, and is backed up by a large Militia, and a still larger body of Volunteers. These all sympathise together, they are all one profession, and they take very good care that the second line of defence will never be short of funds or allowed to fall much astern, whereas in the Royal Navy we are a bundle of loose sticks, nobody cares two straws about us, and we bungle on as best we can till there is some great war or tremendous disaster, and then the Admirals are hung to encourage the Fleet. I approve of Mr. Brassey's proposal that there should be a certain number of scholarships at Greenwich. I would, indeed, throw Greenwich College open to all Naval Reserve Officers, let those pass through it who like; and give a certain number of scholarships for those who are too poor to pay expenses. I should like also to see the young Naval Reserve

¹ Suppose railway trains were insured like ships and cargoes, would not the result be that the directors would have less interest in their safety, that guards, signal-men, and other servants would be underpaid and inferior men? but this is an analogous case.—J. C. W.

Officers pass through the Navy and spend nine months or a year in our Service as Sub-Lieutenants. By that means, as I said the other day, we should be able safely to reduce our lists of Officers and keep them more *au fait* at their work by employing them more constantly. If I commissioned a ship and there was war to-morrow, I would be quite willing to take a large number of Naval Reserve Officers and men and take my chance with them provided they had been previously passed through the Navy. I think our Naval Reserve is not as efficient as it should be, nor as numerous. You cannot expect a Naval Reserve man to be qualified or disciplined in the time now allowed. If the men and Officers were passed through the Navy you would have a reserve on which you could depend. Mr. Shaw Lefevre said a man in a month's time properly brought up would be very effective; but where are you going to get the month in time of war? In the olden times you had twelve months to rig your ships and train your crew, but now-a-days you will be sent to sea and fight your battles in a week, and there will be no time to make your men; and when on this subject we must not forget that other countries have much larger reserves of trained seamen than we have.

I will conclude by saying I think we have every reason to be very grateful to Mr. Brassey, that with the great knowledge he has of maritime matters he should from an independent stand-point, away both from the Navy or the Merchant Service, give so carefully and so accurately a digest of facts such as he has brought before us in his excellent paper, and which has led to such a very interesting and important discussion.

Mr. JOHN WILLIAMSON: Sir Hastings Yelverton, as I hold the position of Hon. Secretary to the "Liverpool Committee for inquiring into the condition of Seamen," I may be able to lay before you some figures that may be of use in this discussion. I must say how very gratifying it is to myself and to my Committee that so many Naval men are found taking an interest in this subject, because I believe the solution of this training question lies in a connection between the Royal Navy and the mercantile marine. I am also very glad to see gentlemen in the position of Mr. Brassey, who spares neither time nor labour in trying to do something for his country's good, endeavouring to solve this question. Mr. Shaw Lefevre at your last week's debate should not I think have made so strong a statement as is reported, that he looked upon the cry as to the deterioration of our seamen as an exaggeration. If Mr. Lefevre would show us facts and figures for his statement, I would join issue with him. In 1869, the Committee of Inquiry took its origin from similar views expressed by Mr. Lefevre, and a series of questions was issued to men who are capable of giving information, viz., shipmasters of the best character in Liverpool, London, and elsewhere; shipowners, once shipmasters, who are capable of expressing a very good opinion, and others. The result was, 80 per cent. of the replies we received stated that seamen had deteriorated, and only 2 per cent. that they were improved, and 3 per cent. that they were as good as before. I think these figures speak for themselves. I may also just add that the only Government document that has ever been brought forward, stating any contrary opinion, was a report by Mr. Gray and Mr. Hamilton, from the Board of Trade, in 1873, which was presented to Parliament, in which they did not say seamen were as good as before, but that the report of their deterioration was not quite borne out. Now no town in the country can express a better opinion on this point than Liverpool, where, at a crowded meeting to meet Mr. Gray before he issued his report, there was not a single hand held up against the statement that the sailor had deteriorated. Mr. Gray, at a public meeting in Liverpool, in the following September, makes remarks of this sort:—

"Unseaworthy sailors would lose the best of ships."

"It was now time they took into consideration the question of unseaworthy sailors."

"He believed, and those gentlemen who were his colleagues believed, that if it was really wanted to prevent loss of life at sea, they would have to begin with the sailors."

"There was also an immense waste in the Mercantile Marine from the unseaworthiness of seamen, and it was found that men were shipped as seamen who from their physical condition were utterly unfit to go to sea."

And again, at a meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, held at Newcastle-on-Tyne, on the 21st of September of the same year, Mr. Gray says:—"The question of loss of life at sea was not a question of unseaworthiness of ships so much as of unseaworthiness of seamen."

I consider that report and these statements by Mr. Gray most contradictory. The evidence of the fact of this deterioration is undoubted. I cannot go back fifty years and say, the seamen then were better than they are now. I have to deal simply with the fact that they are now very bad, and also that there are not 25 per cent. of fore-castle hands that know the ordinary duties of seamen. I take it that there are 150,000 hands, all told, in the Mercantile Marine, 16,000 of whom are apprentices. I may mention that these apprentices are generally not in the fore-castle, they are in the round-house, or in the poop, training to be Officers and masters, so that I am dealing simply with grown-up hands. Now, if only 25 per cent. of these fore-castle hands are seamen in the proper sense, we have barely 40,000 A.B.'s in the Mercantile Marine of this country. We have 19,000 foreigners, according to the Board of Trade returns, of these, a few blacks. Lascars are in some of the Suez Canal steamers, and a larger number of them in the Peninsular and Oriental boats—about 5,000. I will mention how this has arisen. The Company's Superintendent stated at a meeting in London last week, that they were obliged, from the insubordination of the men, to abolish all the white fore-castle hands, and to replace them with Lascars. These Lascars I do not include in the number of A.B.'s at all. We have then remaining nearly 15,000 Swedes, Danes, and other white foreigners, in our Mercantile Marine, and, as Mr. Corry says, any shipowner in this country would be delighted to man his ships with them. All A.B.'s are paid alike, and not, as has been stated by gentlemen in the House of Commons, that shipowners take foreigners because they get them at lower wages than British sailors; they are all shipped at the same time at the shipping office, and at the same wages, and these foreigners are the best men in our fore-castles—any shipmaster will tell you this.

Captain WILSON: Are these foreigners plus the 40,000?

Mr. WILLIAMSON: No; of the 40,000 A.B.'s, about 15,000 are foreigners; that gives you 25,000 good English A.B.'s in the Mercantile Marine of this country. Out of these about 11,000 belong to the first-class Royal Naval Reserves; that is what the Navy has to fall back upon in an emergency. Now I would ask Naval gentlemen, how many of those will they get in the first five or six months of a war? It would not be 3,000 or 4,000 at the outside. Mr. Brassey, in his speech, has suggested one or two excellent measures for improving the condition of masters. The whole subject divides itself into two parts, first, the remedial dealing with the existing state of things; and second, the question of supplies. In the remedial part I quite agree with Mr. Brassey, that a compulsory benefit fund for seamen should be established. Mr. Brassey spoke to a large number of respectable sailors in Liverpool last December, and without one dissentient, they agreed to this. He put before them, that no Government would impose upon them a compulsory pension fund,—they must do it of their own accord; and after he had reasoned the thing out in a most able manner, they all agreed to it; and I believe if Mr. Brassey were to stump the country, all the sea-ports would equally agree with the Liverpool men on this point. Then, as to the second remedy, viz., that before being allowed to rate as A.B., satisfactory proof of having been four years at sea should be produced. You find many A.B.'s tell you, that they wish to leave the sea, because they get no protection at all. They do not like to be in the fore-castles with so many incompetent men; they say, the duties of the ship are thrown upon a few, while the others do not do the work, and yet all get the same pay. I may say that all the respectable seamen are unanimously in favour of this protection. I do not believe it would punish the shipowners in any way, the constitution of the fore-castles would be improved. The pay all round I do not believe would be greater than it is now, but you would really improve the condition of the better men; you would raise

their status, and they would occupy a position which they do not occupy at present.

As to the advance notes, my friend Mr. Corry and I must differ on this point. We had a very large meeting of shipowners in Liverpool the other day belonging to the Association of Sailing Shipowners of the Port, and they almost unanimously agreed to the abolition of the advance note; the few who objected did not object on the principle of the thing, but because they felt it would produce a great deal of inconvenience to the shipowners in engaging crews. We made this suggestion, that the law should not come into operation until twelve months after the passing of the Act, which would give time to inform the seaman that they must take care to have a few pounds in their pocket, instead of coming on board ship destitute as they do now; the abolition of the advance note, I believe, would, to a great extent, take the men out of the hands of crimps and harpies. I may add, the better class of sailors wish these advance notes abolished.

Now I come to the question of the supply of good trained men. We have to deal with a recognised waste of 16,000 a year, which is about 10 per cent. upon the sailor hands all told—I think it is more, I believe it is fully that. Some people estimate it at 20,000, however, take it at 16,000. From the apprenticeship system the annual supply is about 3,500, and the training ships round our coasts supply something like 700 or 800, it is near a thousand altogether—but some of these ships supply apprentices, such as the "Conway," in Liverpool, the "Worcester," and one or two of the better class training ships, and these are included in the supply under the head of apprentices. Taking it, however, at 1,000 a year, that gives us 4,500 a year to meet this waste of 16,000 men. A great deal has been said about training ships, and the Royal Commission were strong on this point likewise. Our Committee have taken it up and dealt with it on the recommendation of the Royal Commission, but we find it very hard indeed to get steam shipowners to agree to a rating for the supply of trained hands. They do not feel the pinch as the sailing shipowners do, they get the pick of the men, while the sailing shipowners are those who alone are training seamen. I may also mention, you could not introduce a law to compel shipowners to carry apprentices, because steamers cannot take apprentices, they do not require them and they cannot train them. You would have to fall back upon sailing shipowners and only those engaged in the foreign trade. Any shipowner knows perfectly well, if there was a compulsory law to carry apprentices, no ship could be compelled to carry more than four apprentices to every 1,000 tons. On that basis we have actually more apprentices by about 2,000, than we would be compelled to carry in our foreign-going ships to-day; therefore, we must throw on one side altogether any attempt to make apprenticeship compulsory; few shipowners carry more than that proportion. I know some carry eight or ten, some four or six, and some none at all, so that the one equalizes the other. There are a number of sailing ships that cannot carry apprentices, ships engaged only in short trades or summer trades, and that lay up in the winter months; therefore, you could not force them to carry apprentices. At the same time I do believe, if you could induce shipowners to perpetuate the apprenticeship system and also to increase it a little, it would be a great boon, and I would suggest that might be done by a rebate to shipowners carrying apprentices out of the light dues. This is a very large fund and out of it we transfer about £50,000 a year to the Consolidated Fund. I throw that out as a suggestion. This is the best system of training and we ought not to neglect but to encourage it. Then as to the training-ship question; after giving every consideration to this subject, the conclusion is forced upon us, that you cannot ask the country to train seamen for the Mercantile Marine, any more than you can ask it to train bricklayers or any other tradesmen—but we say this—as the Royal Navy must have Royal Naval Reserves, and they must have them from the Mercantile Marine, it is the militia to the Navy, it is the duty of the Navy to see these are of the best possible quality, and to be so they should undergo preliminary training, and we consider, as shipowners are the first to lose these men in the event of war, the duty of the Government is to train up to the requirements of the Navy for Reserves, and to pay the cost of such training. Presuming you must have 20,000 as a first-class reserve, it would take ten training ships with 300 in each to train up to in thirteen or fourteen years,

20,000 first-class reserves. Our scheme is this, that the training should only be in connection with the Royal Naval Reserve, and that the cost of the training should be borne by the Navy Estimates—£100,000 a year at the very outside; and such lads should be taken into those ships at about fifteen or sixteen years of age, lads educated and of good *physique*, of the mechanic class, to be kept there one year and then drafted into sailing ships as ordinary seamen, and then, after three years, they would figure as A.B.'s in the Mercantile Marine, and would become first-class Reserve men in the Royal Navy. That is pretty much a brief outline of our scheme, and I believe that is the only way in which Government can be asked to do anything in the way of training seamen for the Mercantile Marine.

Admiral SELWYN: It is clear that we want a certain manufactured article, and, in order to its manufacture, it is required that we should have not shore-going ships but actual sea-going ships. It is also clear that the Navy wants what that service is likely to provide in no very large measure at present, a place for those young boys after a year's training in such work as they can learn in training ships. I do not think it would be too early to take them into training ships at fourteen years old. I recollect perfectly well when midshipmen were constantly entered below that age. They were then perhaps deficient in instruction, but we can give our instruction to a boy who comes from his parents or from the streets, which is most valuable, for a year in a training ship. Then he could be taken and ought to be taken more largely into the Navy. The present complement of our ships of war is not half what it was fifty years ago. A 6,000-ton ship does not now carry more men than a 3,000-ton ship did then. We are relying entirely on what we want during peace for peace purposes, and we are not allowing for any waste to take place, either by sending away prize crews or the deaths which would occur in war. The main point is that we should manufacture an article which is required both by ourselves and by the Mercantile Marine. The Government alone can do that in large measure, and having done that, all the other questions which have been argued will settle themselves. If you manufacture any article of any sort, beyond what the demand may be calling for, you lower the price of that article, and you will no longer have anybody saying in peace that foreign seamen were taken because they were cheaper; nor shall we have any tendency on the part of the Mercantile Marine to take foreigners instead of British seamen if they are both cheap and well trained. But to be well trained, it is in the early years of a seaman's life that he must acquire thorough notions of discipline, obedience, and morality, and that will never be taught in the forecables of the Mercantile Marine, but it can and will be taught in the Navy. Those men will go off under a proper system to the Mercantile Marine, for no seaman is of any value who is only a man-of-war's man; he ought to go all the world over, to see the service of every country, to pass some of his time in steamers and some in sailing ships, he should know everything and go everywhere. Having got those men you need not trouble yourself about whether they will offer themselves to you or not; they will be in existence and you will get your fair share of them, as Captain Wilson says: only lay down enough of the spawn, you will have plenty of fish. To do this we may have a much larger number of training ships, but they must be under proper guidance. We must not confuse training ships which train apprentices for captains and Officers of merchant ships with those that simply provide seamen, but this has been done to a considerable extent. We must not either confuse the fact of the apprenticeship system being an eventual advantage to the Mercantile Marine, with the fact that no owner can afford to carry his goods about the world, unless he can do it at an equal price with any other man. If you burden him with any expense which does not repay him, you put a tax on his work by which he is prevented from competing with others on fair terms, and you encourage by that very act the commerce of other nations to supplant your own. You are now training a large number of foreign seamen in your Mercantile Marine for other countries; they will disappear in the event of war; you are relying on those men and even getting them into the Reserve. But you cannot rely on them; notably you cannot rely on German sailors who are under the same regulations as the rest of their countrymen for maritime service instead of military service, and you would fail, particularly in that sudden manning of a fleet which could alone conduce to any useful result.

You may get back the men after a time, but you cannot get them back at once. Your battles in future will be decided in months and not in years. Train them largely; make the article everybody requires, and leave the disposition of it, shall I say to fate or to the inclinations of the seaman? You will always find him when he is required, if you give him enough of that prospect or possibility of prize-money, that possibility of active service in which the true seaman delights, that possibility of serving under good Officers of his own choosing which existed formerly, not being tied like sheep and sent on board a certain ship on which he neither knows nor approves of the Officers. The present system does not allow the Officers to become acquainted with the men or the men with the Officers. You discharge the men and turn them adrift in many instances, where you ought to keep them on, and only those great owners of the Mercantile Marine have succeeded thoroughly who have adopted the old system of having good men and keeping them at whatever price. It is not cheap to have bad men. It is not possible to elevate any one good man while in contact with a great number of bad men. You cannot raise an apprentice into the proper condition in which you wish him to exist, of morality, abedience, and discipline, if you keep him during his youth largely in contact with those who know neither the one nor the other. The Navy is the place for proper training, and I am quite sure the Mercantile Marine will be delighted to receive from us such men as we should, under these conditions, send to them. We have to unteach so much to the mercantile seaman at present when he comes to us, that it takes us much more than a year to do that. We find it difficult enough in six years to teach men all that they are required to do on board men-of-war, and it is not to be supposed by one year's contact with a man-of-war, that a man would be deprived of those habits which are most objectionable in that situation of life: still less could we depend upon him for that *solidarité*, that feeling of ship-mate-ship which is only acquired after many years' service together. A man when he goes into action relies on his right or left hand man in proportion as he knows him, and the way to make them rely on each other is to train them carefully together in a body. We shall never do better than by recurring to many of our old principles, notably that of the apprenticeship system. I do not regard it as a hardship or objectionable in any way, that the apprenticeship system should be again enforced, even if there are to be apprentices on board steamers. If, as seems probable, a large proportion of our carrying trade should be done in steamers, it is as necessary that there should be apprentices to steam-work as that there should be others in sailing vessels, and I am quite sure the flow from the school ships into the Navy, and thence into the Mercantile Marine, can be kept up so as to fulfil the most desirable object of combining the two services together, but not by going from the inferior service to the superior, but from the superior to the inferior,—inferior, that is to say, in habits of discipline, I do not say in anything else. As regards the Officers, if we had young Officers fit to put by the side of our sub-lieutenants, to send on board men-of-war in an emergency, possibly the Naval Reserve Officer might be made equally efficient in a very short time as the Naval Officer. But we have to deal with a close service, in which a man must serve constantly to be efficient, and you would scarcely tempt men at the age of thirty or forty, after long experience in the Mercantile Marine, to take their place beside sub-lieutenants or lieutenants in a man-of-war. I think these observations will show that my chief object is to make a proper junction of the Mercantile Marine and the Navy, but to do it by passing from the Navy to the Mercantile Marine, by manufacturing the article and then passing it on. I have also observed in a previous pamphlet of mine, the means by which the men so acquired, if you desire to have Reserves, can be retained by one ever-lengthening chain. If you give to the seaman a very small fee per annum, accruing to him only when he comes back to the Navy, he will come back to the Navy whenever you want him. If you give to Mercantile Officers the same training in the Navy as they give in the French Service, that is to say, training in youth from fourteen to sixteen, and then pass them on to the Mercantile Marine, I think the Mercantile Marine would not find reason to regret the change.

Admiral Sir WILLIAM KING HALL: Captain Wilson having alluded to training ships not in the service in disparaging terms, I, having been on the "Chichester" and "Aretusa" Committee for the last ten years, believe that none

of Her Majesty's training ships turn out better sailors than the much despised "Chichester" and "Arethusa," and that none of Her Majesty's training ships have been, or are more efficiently commanded and conducted, or boys better trained, or turned out better sailors. They are not taught rifle, cutlass, or gun drill, certainly; but I will give one proof. Last month, when the prizes were given by the Lord Mayor, at the Freemasons' Hall, to the schools and these ships, a fine young sailor was present who had been 10 months on board the "Chichester," and had returned from his first voyage to Australia; had been rated an ordinary seaman; very good for ability and very good for conduct; received £2 10s. a month. As for the want of boys to go to sea, why, as a nation, we are all sailors. Wherever you find a pond, a pool of water, in any part of the country, you will find boys sculling about in a tub or on a plank, whilst in France they all want to be soldiers, and strut about in a cocked hat and wooden musket. Boys want to go to sea for the love of it. I was quite prepared to go into the Merchant Service if I had not got into the Navy. And how was the seamanship learnt? Why, the boy commenced his education by sculling and pulling a boat, and having to furl the royal on their way out. When we were young men, some of the finest warrant officers that ever stood on the decks were boys brought in as Officers' servants; the Officers took an interest in those boys, and so they pushed on. Some Captains of our ships in those days allowed an Officer, if he found a fine suitable boy in the country, who was anxious to go to sea, to bring him to the ship. My opinion is, there is a great deal too much of the pupil teacher in all these training ships. Let any man take the penny steamer in summer and go from London Bridge to Westminster, and he will see thousands of boys larking on the banks, and if you say, "Will you go to sea?" they would go at once, but they don't want to go to training ships to be crammed up with pupil teachers, they want to gain their education at sea. I will ask Captain Wilson this question, whether the boys have endeavoured to get out of one of the ships in a very discreditable manner? In the "Chichester" a boy who was birched begged to be retained, promised to be a good boy, and has been a good boy ever since. The plan we adopt is to have a test examination, let the boys know the first four rules of arithmetic, reading, writing, and as soon as they can do that, let them learn seamanship. In 1861 I was called upon by the Admiralty, when in command of the "Royal Adelaide," to send up a plan for the instruction of 600 boys. It was not half far enough advanced for them,—the four first rules of arithmetic, reading, and writing would not do, so I got out of her as quick as I could, and somebody else went into her. Let me give you a proof. A little boy in that ship was brought up to be caued; they said he was sulky, that he would not learn his geography. I said, "Dry your eyes; what's the matter, boy?" He said, "Sir, I came to sea to be a sailor. I have no father; I can write to my mother; I can read my Bible—that is education enough." I took him out of the school; I agreed with the boy. I believe there is no difficulty in getting boys if you do away with these pupil teachers. With regard to novices, we had novices. What was the finest frigate action ever performed? Sir Edward Pellew's. And what was his crew mainly composed of? Novices, Cornish miners; and we had novices in the "Royal Adelaide,"—young fellows who wanted to go to sea, who came to be sailors, and I met several afterwards petty officers. If a man's heart is in the sea, and he wants to be a sailor, he will soon make a sailor if it is in him. He wants to go to sea, he does not want to be put in training ships. Now-a-days they have to go through a medical examination, and a man may be rejected if he has a hollow tooth, or a boy one-eighth of an inch too short. We are a little too particular in that style, and we are a little too particular about the education, and to talk about this country ever wanting seamen when they are all bred seamen! In France they are all soldiers, but here every boy wants to be a sailor, and all you have to do is let him be a sailor.

Captain WILSON: I think Sir William Hall has mistaken what I have said. I have no wish to undervalue either the "Chichester" or "Arethusa," but what I did say was the ships which were lent for private training were not wholly appropriated to that work, for we find that there are under 100 trained in vessels which ought to train 500. I did not speak of the training of the boys themselves.

Mr. BRASSEY: I regret that my duties in another place require me to leave

this room, and, therefore, make it necessary that I should, without delay make a brief reply to some of the observations which have been addressed to this meeting. Sir Hastings, I am very grateful to the various speakers for the favourable terms in which they have been pleased to refer to my paper. I may honestly say it is the result of days and nights of study of a literature, which, however important it may be, is certainly not particularly attractive. I refer to the Blue Book literature under which the shelves of my library have long groaned. The volumes of Parliamentary literature upon maritime subjects during the last quarter of a century, are something quite amazing. I hope that now the public attention is at last rivetted upon this great question of the safety of life at sea, and the condition of our maritime population, some good fruit will be gathered from the abundant literary seed which has been sown in previous years by Parliament. We have heard deplorable statements with reference to the deficiency and the inefficiency of seamen, and we are all met together here to make suggestions, with a view to remedy these very serious evils. I have said in my paper that which I must now repeat, that in the first place it is a question of wages, including in that term not merely the money paid to the man but the conditions of life which are offered to him, the accommodation on board ship, fair and just treatment by his Officers, and a fair and reasonable amount of labour to perform. Those are various elements which may be grouped together under the head of wages, and I say, unless the shipowner offers to those whom he employs, terms and conditions which will compare favourably with the terms and conditions offered by other employers to the same class of men, he cannot expect to obtain their services. Indeed, unless the terms and conditions offered are adequate, it is perfectly idle to undertake any artificial or other system of training, with a view to produce the men that are required. Having trained men for the sea, and made them handy men for almost any purpose on shore, the shipowner must necessarily lose the services of the men thus placed in his hand. We have heard to-day of 400 trained seamen being employed in the collieries of the north, and we know that there is an annual loss of seamen, from the fact that men seek shore employment in preference to the sea. Then you have another competitor in this matter, I mean shipowners of the United States. I do not know how the wages compare at this moment, but I believe, until a very recent date, it was the case that the wages in American ships were somewhat higher than those in English ships, and as a consequence, the American Merchant Navy was largely manned by men who had left the British Service to sail under the American flag. Therefore I say, unless the wages are adequate, it is idle to expect our merchant vessels shall be properly manned. The question of wages I need not refer to at greater length, it being especially a question with which the shipowner has to deal. The other point to which I should like to refer is the question of training. The question is whether the Government can assist the shipowner in this important work. We are all agreed that the Government cannot interfere simply to enable the shipowner to obtain labour on cheap terms. The action of the Navy must be limited, with a strict reference to our naval requirements, and having regard to the essential importance of creating a sufficient reserve of well-trained seamen to man the Navy in case of the emergency of a great naval war; the question is whether it might not be a national duty, which devolves upon our statesmen to consider, how best the Government may combine with the private shipowners in order to provide this Naval Reserve. At the present time I believe the Naval Reserve is up to the strength laid down by the Admiralty Regulations, but the strength required under the present Admiralty Regulations is considerably less than the strength recommended by the Manning Commission of 1859; and it is a debatable point whether the Admiralty have been well advised in reducing the strength of the Naval Reserve to the standard at present adopted. I think that if the Government is to assist in training seamen with the view to providing an adequate Naval Reserve, of all plans which I have ever seen, the best and the most practicable appears to be the plan recommended by the last Manning Commission. As I sketched out the details of that plan in my paper, I do not think I shall be occupying your time satisfactorily if I go over the ground again. It does certainly suggest itself to me, that it would be a great advantage to the shipowners and to the Mercantile Marine generally, if there was established in every great port a thoroughly efficient training vessel, con-

ducted by Naval Officers, upon the principles which have been followed with so much success in the ships already established at Portsmouth and Plymouth. When we are told that there is a deterioration of seamen, I cannot help thinking that the existence of a training ship in each of these great maritime centres would do good, by offering a type of excellence which all agree it would be very desirable indeed for the Mercantile Marine to imitate. Captain Wilson, who speaks with very great authority and experience on this subject, says the kind of training vessels proposed by the Manning Commission are not so satisfactory as larger ships, that it is an extravagant thing to train only 100 boys in a ship, that you have a larger staff of instructors, and other expenses are increased in proportion to the number trained. I suppose that the Manning Commission intended, by limiting the number to 100, to afford the means of training a number of other boys side by side with the boys whose expenses were defrayed by the Admiralty, and thus they suggested the plan of day boarders. I think they also suggested that if you provided a ship, which was capable of taking 300 boys for training, and you only filled up 100 of those places by boys paid for by the State, it would afford an opportunity to the shipowner, or to benevolent persons and people interested in boys, to send them to these ships to be trained on the Admiralty system, and to be paid for from private resources. I think it really would be a very valuable thing that these vessels should be provided at various ports where there would be an opportunity afforded, to introduce boys at private expense who would have the immense advantage of this naval training.

So many points have been raised, that it would be impossible to deal with them all. Something was said about Officers, and I certainly myself should welcome any practicable proposal for giving to the Officers, to whom you give commissions in your Naval Reserve, the immense advantages of some experience in the Navy. No doubt there might occasionally be difficulties, but when we take into view the class of youths who are now going to sea in the Merchant Service, and who are now being brought up in the "Conway" and the "Worcester," I cannot see that there should be any practicable difficulty in selecting for the distinction of a commission in the Naval Reserve well educated Officers in the Merchant Service, whom you would be very glad to associate with Naval Officers in the Royal Service. Mr. Lindsay years ago pointed out in his admirable separate Report on the Manning of the Navy, that there were in the Merchant Service ample materials for such selection, and what Mr. Lindsay said in 1859 I believe is far more true at the present time. If the Navy would associate itself more intimately than hitherto with the cream and flower of the Merchant Service, they would do a great deal both to strengthen the Navy, by providing reserves of Officers as well as reserves of men, to whom we should look with confidence in time of war, and also by adding materially to the professional status and efficiency of the Officers of the Merchant Service. You want to make the command of one of our noble merchantmen a recognised and an honourable professional career. At the present time, in our over-peopled country, the difficulty for hundreds and thousands of young men, well educated and well born, is to find an opening. I venture to say the command of a fine merchant ship is a career at least as honourable and as attractive as a good many of the very miscellaneous employments to which young men are now looking; and I do not know that there would be any means so likely to make a career of the kind that I am describing, attractive, and to give it a high professional tone and social recognition, as the association of these Officers, at an early stage of their career, with the Royal Navy. I have spoken of this recognition and association of the merchant Officers with the Navy in a Naval Reserve point of view. I believe that if you could by this means elevate the status of the Officers of the Merchant Service, and give them that independence which I should like to see them possess, you would most materially contribute to promote the greater serenity of life at sea. There are, no doubt, cases in which Officers do not speak freely to their owners as to the condition of their ships; they are afraid to do it. I have known instances in which it has been the case. I do say if you could, by the means I have proposed, and by other means, put the Officers of your Merchant Service in a position of the same professional independence, with regard to professional matters, which a barrister enjoys when he is consulted by a client upon a

question of law, you would have provided one of the most effectual guarantees you could possibly provide for preventing the sending forth to sea of ships which were unseaworthy from any cause whatever.

I will not trouble the meeting further. I have listened to what has been said by various speakers with profound interest. I can only hope that I may be able in another place to turn to account what I have learned from this discussion.

