

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

DUNEDIN.

TUESDAY, 18TH MAY, 1897.

HENRY WACKELDINE was examined on oath.

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am a fireman on s.s. "Waihora."
2. How long have you been in the Union Company's service?—As near as I can tell, nine years.
3. During that time have you belonged to a benefit society?—Yes.
4. What society?—The Druids.
5. Are you a financial member now?—Yes.
6. What is your contribution?—I am not exactly certain, but I think it is either 1s. or 1s. 3d. a week.
7. Can you tell us what benefits you derive through belonging to the Druids—I mean as to sick and death rates and so on?—I get £1 a week if sick.
8. Do you get medical attendance besides for your wife and family?—I do in cases of sickness, and children up to a certain age; but not in regard to confinements.
9. *Mr. Fisher.*] All ailments except confinements?—Yes.
10. *The Chairman.*] Do you get anything at death?—£20 at death.
11. That is a funeral allowance?—Yes.
12. Does your wife get anything?—Nothing except the £20 at my death; in case of the wife dying the member draws £10.
13. Can you tell us what the comparative benefits are in the Union Company's benefit society?—I do not think they are anything different to the other benefit societies. Members get £1 a week, so far as I know.
14. You are speaking now from your belief?—Yes.
15. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Are the benefits—that is to say, the medical attendance and so on—the same all through?—Yes.
16. To the same extent?—Yes.
17. And the funeral allowance to the same extent?—Yes.
18. *The Chairman.*] During these nine years of service you have never been asked by any officer of the Union Company to leave your society and join the Union Company's society?—No; since I have been in the employ of the Union Company I have not been asked to do that once.
19. *Hon. Major Steward.*] That is, you have never been asked by the Union Company?—No.
20. *The Chairman.*] Are you a member of the Union Company's society as well?—No. I asked once to be allowed to join their benefit society.
21. What was the answer?—They told me I would not be allowed to join it because they did not wish to clash with outside friendly societies.
22. *Hon. Major Steward.*] You were refused permission to join it on account of belonging to another society?—Yes.
23. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell us, in your opinion, the reason the Union Company had for starting this society?—No; I have no idea whatever.
24. You had no idea, when the Druids offered equal benefits, why a society for the Union Company's employes was necessary?—No; I did not know any reason for starting that benefit society.
25. You have never heard amongst any of the men belonging to the Union Company's society that they have had pressure put upon them to join?—No; not in any of the boats I have been in.
26. *Hon. Major Steward.*] What boats have you been in during the nine years?—The first ship I was in was the "Arawata"; then the "Te Kapo"; then the "Mararoa"; then the "Wakaitipu"; then the "Rotomahana"; then the "Te Anau"; then the "Manapouri"; and now I am in the "Waihora." I have never heard any complaint made by the men; they never talk about the society's affairs before me.
27. *The Chairman.*] You have never heard that it was a condition of employment in the Union Company's service that the men should join this society?—No.
28. *Mr. Fisher.*] You say that the men belonging to the society on board the Union Company's ships never mention the business of their benefit society in the presence of the men?—They never talk about it—never to me, because I am not in their society, and know nothing about their society.
29. I gathered from what you said that the men belonging to the Union Company's benefit society were careful to refrain from mentioning its affairs?—Not exactly careful; they talk amongst themselves about it. I never take any notice of them because I do not belong to the society.
30. *The Chairman.*] Because you are a Druid?—Yes.
31. *Mr. Fisher.*] Do you know as a fact that men who do not belong to any other friendly society are compelled to join the Union benefit society?—Those not belonging to any other society have to join.