

59. Have you any opinion as to whether it would be advantageous or otherwise for the society to register under the Friendly Societies Act?—My opinion is that the society would have a better standing financially unregistered than it would have registered.

60. At all events, if you decline to say whether you are a member of the Seamen's Union or not, there is no harm in asking whether you are at all familiar with the terms of the Shipping and Seamen's Act?—I am pretty well acquainted with the Act. I possess a copy of it, and I have gone through it. I take an active interest in the workings of any other societies connected with or for the benefit of seamen.

61. Do you know, then, of any of the obligations of shipowners to seamen in the event of the disability or sickness of seamen while employed by them?—Yes, I do.

62. Do you know of any men who have become sick while in the employment of the Union Company, and who have been put on shore?—Yes, there was my own case.

63. Were you treated, or did you apply to get treated, by the company in terms of the Shipping and Seamen's Act?—I did not apply. I went with the captain to the company's office. It was my desire to go into the hospital, and the acting-manager of the company in Sydney gave me a letter of introduction to the Sydney Hospital. I went there and was received.

64. You did not pay?—No.

65. How long were you there?—About three weeks.

66. Did your wages go on?—No.

67. I do not wish to inquire too particularly, but what was the matter with you?—I do not know. The doctors have not found out yet; I have been in the Dunedin Hospital for the same complaint.

68. Was it an illness caused by your work as a seaman?—I think it was a form of malarial fever. I fancy it was contracted in the islands. While I keep away from the islands I am in good health, but when I go there I am always laid up afterwards. When I came from Sydney the society's medical officer in Dunedin ordered me to the hospital for an operation, but the doctors at the hospital said they could find nothing with me. I then left the hospital.

69. You are not a member of the committee, but you say you take an active interest in the affairs of the society?—Yes.

70. You know, of course, the amount of accrued funds on deposit in the Bank of New Zealand?—Yes.

71. Do members of the society receive any bonus, either from the capital or from the interest paid on the capital deposited?—Not that I am aware of. I have not received any.

72. Do you know any man who ever did?—No.

73. Who gets the benefit of the interest on the £4,300 deposited in the bank?—I take it that it goes into the funds of the society.

74. *The Chairman.*] You tell us you consider it would be better for the Union Company's society to remain unregistered; tell us your reason?—It is better to the extent of 20 per cent. to the contributions of members. The Union Company pays 20 per cent. to the contributions of members to the funds of the society, which amounts to something like £500 a year.

75. I see the company's contribution was £315 last year?—Well, if it was a registered society it would lose that contribution.

76. You think that, although the company started this society from philanthropic motives, they would withdraw their contribution if the society was registered, and make no donation at all?—Certainly, I believe they would.

77. Why do you think they would withdraw it? Presumably the society would be registered with its rules?—I think they would withdraw.

78. Do you think the representation on the board of management is a fair one?—I think the majority of the societies should rule, and that the company should not have the ruling power in the society. The society should be ruled by the members themselves, and the company should have representation in the management of the society in proportion to the amount of its contribution.

79. Then, you really think that if the society was set on its own feet without the company's donation it would be better for the society?—No; I believe it would go "bung."

80. *Mr. Fisher.*] Do I correctly understand you to say that, in your opinion, the company established the society from humanitarian motives?—Yes, that is my belief.

81. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Referring to this question of contributions, I find that Rule 47 prescribes that "the company shall give to the society at its commencement a donation of £500"—which, according to the balance-sheets, appears to have been done—"and thereafter contribute for the first five years 20 per cent. per annum (not to exceed £500 per annum) on the subscriptions of ordinary members." That, according to the balance-sheet, appears to have been done. That is what would appear to be a great advantage?—Yes.

82. You are aware that the rule ends as follows: "At the end of which period a readjustment of payments shall be made"?—Yes.

83. Well, as the first edition of the rules is dated the 1st February, 1891, this period of five years has expired. Has the society readjusted the payments in accordance with the rule?—Not that I am aware of.

84. It still continues the payment of the 20 per cent.?—Yes.

85. But it has the power to withdraw?—Yes.

86. Now, as regards the management of the society, you have expressed the opinion that the subscribing members should have the control?—Yes; that the majority should rule.

87. Your view being that the company, as a contributing body, by way of this percentage, should have an amount of representation equivalent to its share of the whole?—Yes.

88. Well, is that so now?—No.