

given, and, of course, the crew took that grace. At its expiration we were supposed to pay 10s. entrance-fee. It was six months, however, before I joined. Of course, they all joined at the same time. The company never asked me to join.

370. *The Chairman.*] Have you heard of any who were compelled to join?—The “Te Anau” was at the other side of the wharf, and her men joined right away. They got information that if they did not join they would have to leave. I do not know who gave that information. It was “in the air,” so to speak. I asked the question, if I was a member of any other society would I get employment, and they said “Yes,” and that I was not compelled to join. I was a single man then, and did not belong to any benefit society.

371. *Mr. Fisher.*] Have you any idea of your own why they told you that you would have to leave?—They never told me that; it was never mentioned. We were paid off, and we all went back again. If you once got out of a boat the saying was that you would not get back again unless you joined the society. But, as I say, we were all paid off for a fortnight, and then we all went back, and we had not joined the society. There was only one man in the boat belonging to a friendly society, and he was in the boat all the time.

372. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Are you satisfied with the management of the society since you have been a member?—Yes. Of course, the rules have been altered, and are not now so much in favour of the Union Company as they were.

373. Do you think it is a fair adjustment that the representation on the committee should be equal when the Union Company contributes only one-fifth of the revenue and the men four-fifths? Do you not think that the representation should be in proportion to the contributions?—Yes.

374. *Mr. Fisher.*] Have you any opinion of your own on the subject of registration—whether the society should be registered or unregistered?—I have none.

375. The men are all very pleased at being asked to join the society?—There has been some dissatisfaction amongst them, but you just hear of it now and again. You cannot take any notice of it, as it is so contradictory.

376. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Have you had any official intimation lately that the company proposes to retire from the management of the society, and leave it entirely to the men?—No; but I was not at the last general meeting.

377. You have not heard it so stated in the fleet?—No.

DANIEL MATHIESON was examined on oath.

378. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am a wharf employé.

379. How long have you been in the society?—I think, since November, 1893.

380. How long have you been a committee-man?—Since that date.

381. You were nominated a committee-man?—Yes.

382. You asked to be allowed to come and give evidence: will you kindly tell us what you can about the matter? What is your opinion as to how the thing stands?—I would be very sorry to see the society disbanded in any shape or form, because it is a benefit to me.

383. Do you think that if the company withdrew its contribution the society would be disbanded?—No, I do not think so.

384. Would you prefer it carried on as a registered or as an ordinary friendly society?—The members of the society would like the company to pay that contribution to keep the society going.

385. And supposing the company did not, would the men carry the society on as an ordinary friendly society?—I cannot speak for them all. I would not be inclined to, because I belong to another lodge.

386. Well, excepting that the society gets this subsidy from the company, it stands on no better footing than an ordinary friendly society?—We get better benefits out of the company's society than I get out of the Foresters.

387. What better benefits?—Surrender value; and the benevolent fund is another.

388. *Hon. Major Steward.*] That is independent of the sick- and death-allowance?—Yes; we can vote sums for benevolent purposes.

389. Supposing the society should be registered with these rules as they now stand, or with such modifications as might be required, would it not be a great advantage to have it registered?—I would not prefer it registered. I would prefer it carried on as it is.

390. *The Chairman.*] If you have no objection, tell us what, in your opinion, accounts for preference being expressed for an unregistered over a registered society?—My opinion is this: The committee of management is very honest in its dealings with the men. In cases I have seen of accidents, and so forth, the men have received more benefits than they would have in any registered friendly society. I have never gone into the rules very much. I am a member of the Foresters, and have been for about nine or ten years. There was a division of money made some time ago, and I think my share was £1 10s.

391. *Hon. Major Steward.*] What I meant was this: Supposing this society was registered with these identical rules, do you not think it would be an advantage to have the rules capable of enforcement in law—they are not now?—That is a matter of opinion.

392. *The Chairman.*] We have been informed that one reason why the society is not registered is that the Registrar of Friendly Societies would refuse to register it on account of his having considered that it is on a false basis from an actuary's point of view—that is to say, the moneys paid in will not be sufficient to pay all the benefits: do you mean to tell me you would rather be in an unregistered society which stands upon a false actuarial basis—which means that you continue paying in your money, never to get it back again probably, because the society will break up from its own inability to pay—than in a society in which the rules are made sufficient and the position of members is defined?—I would rather remain in the Union Company's society, with the rules as