

24. *Mr. Fisher.*] That is all the correspondence you wish to refer to?—Yes; they are fair samples; I swear to that.

25. *The Chairman.*] They are not picked out as exceptions?—No, decidedly not.

26. *Mr. Fisher.*] Now, I asked you at the beginning of your evidence how long you had been secretary, and you said since October, 1892, and that you are still secretary?—Yes.

27. Do you know a man named McEwan, who gave evidence yesterday?—Yes.

28. Is he is right in saying—and, if he is wrong, why should he say it—that you had been dismissed from your position as secretary for writing that Dorling letter?—He is wrong. I cannot imagine why he said so. I might mention that the committee have come to the conclusion that it would be better to have a man as secretary who would give his whole time to the work. That would not pay me, and consequently I have resigned my position as from the 30th June next.

29. That is not the point. He said you were dismissed from your position for writing that Dorling letter: that is not true?—That is my statement.

30. This is what the *Times* gives in its report of McEwan's evidence: "The letters which had been written saying that the men would be dismissed if they did not join the society had been written by the secretary of the society on his own responsibility, and had brought about his dismissal." That is untrue?—Yes, that is untrue.

31. Very well, I merely asked that question for this purpose: It disposes of the credibility of Mr. McEwan on that point?—On that point, of course.

32. Is there now, or has there been, anything in the nature of pressure put upon men to join the benefit society?—In what way do you mean? The rules provide that it is compulsory for those men to join who are not members of other societies.

33. Well, you say it is indispensable—that it is a condition of their employment in the service?—It is hardly a condition of their employment, because they are taken into the service before they become members, and are not admitted to the society until they have been at least a month in the service.

34. That is so in some cases?—That has been so since I have been secretary. It was not so before, I believe.

35. But, without any hair-splitting, it is a fact that they must join the society?—Taken as a general rule, it is so, if not members of other societies, in accordance with Rule 5. I do not think it has ever been denied.

36. If we get men here, and some of them, to all appearances, very strong witnesses, who deny the existence of any pressure whatever, what do you say?—I may say this: I am not aware of any man having been dismissed for refusing to join.

37. But they get there all the same?—Not that I am aware of.

37A. Here is this letter of yours to the purser of the "Ovalau," "If Wilson can satisfy you that he was a member of the Foresters before he joined the company's service he need not join our society, but, if he cannot do this, enrol him forthwith"?—Yes.

38. You know what that means?—It is plain enough what it means.

39. He has got to join?—I presume so. I do not think it has ever been denied that the membership is compulsory when the men are not members of other societies.

40. We get men here who, to put it lightly, vascillate upon that point?—All the men do not hear what occurs on the boats; they can merely give their own experiences.

41. I would like to have it from you that it is a condition of the service that he must join the benefit society if he does not belong to another society?—Yes; that is, up to the time that this conciliation agreement was settled in March last. Since then, in writing to the pursers in regard to the enrolment of the men, I have always been careful to state "if you desire to join," as my letters will show. I might read one or two of them perhaps.

42. If you do not mind, Mr. Grater, I would rather get to another point. Is this a fact? Mr. McLean made a statement that "it did not concern the Union Company, for the company had come to an agreement with the Seamen's Union by which, after the 30th September, no influence was to be used in any way on either side—it was to be completely voluntary whether men stayed in the society or not, and when that agreement was signed, which would probably be in a day or two, instructions would be given even now to bring its provisions into effect." In fact, Mr. McLean told us it was the intention of the Union Company to retire from all control of the benefit society: is that a fact?—I cannot speak as to the intentions of the Union Company, but if Mr. McLean said so I presume he is correct.

43. You have no information on that point?—If Mr. McLean said so, I would be quite satisfied it was so.

44. Mr. McEwan, who professes to know so much—indeed, to know everything under the sun—told us that Mr. George McLean, in making this statement, did not know what he was talking about, and that the statement was erroneous?—Of course, I should not like to hold myself responsible for all Mr. McEwan's statements.

45. *Hon. Major Steward.*] I should like to ask you one or two questions. I think I understood you to say that men were not allowed to join the benefit society until they had been a month in the service of the company?—Yes, taken as a general rule; that is, since I have been secretary, or shortly after.

46. Then, after they have been a month in the service of the company, what happens? Is it intimated to them by the purser or chief officer that they are required to join, under Rule 5, always provided that they cannot show they are financial members of another friendly society?—Precisely.

47. What is the first thing they have to do if they consent to it?—They are passed by the doctor.

48. And if the doctor would not pass them, what would then happen? Would they be retained in the service of the company, and refused admission to the society?—Yes, so far as I know. I