

have nothing to do with the employment of men. There is one man at present I can speak for. The percentage is very small. I do not suppose 1 per cent. is declined by the doctor. This man was declined by the doctor three or four months ago. He is not a member of the society, and is still in the company's service.

49. Now, then, suppose an employé objects to join the society, and declines to present himself to the doctor, what then happens? Rule 5 says he must be a member of a benefit society. Assuming that the man has been a month in the service, and is told to present himself to the doctor, and refuses, what happens?—The purser reports the matter to me, and I send the report on to the company. So far as I am concerned, there the matter ends.

50. Has such a circumstance ever arisen?—There is a man on one of the boats—I forget which—who declined to join, and he is still in the service.

51. He has not been dismissed?—No.

52. Is that the only case?—The only recent one, so far as I can bring to memory. The refusals are very, very few. There have been others in the past, but I am not aware of a man having been dismissed in consequence of declining. I was speaking of my having written to pursers since March last to only enrol members who desire to join; here is one letter written to the "Taupo" on the 4th April last: "To the Chief Officer, s.s. 'Taupo.'—Dear Sir,—Kindly enrol forthwith any non-members desiring to join who are under forty years of age, and recommended by their chiefs.—Yours faithfully, C. GRATER, Secretary." That is the purport of all letters written since March regarding the enrolment of members.

53. Referring to the letters set out in the previous extracts, here is one to the chief officer of the "Pukaki": "Unless the four men in the engine-room claiming to be Oddfellows can satisfy you that they are financial members of some lodge they must join.—22nd April, 1896." That is in accordance with Rule 5; but I want to ask you the meaning of this word "must": you know that a law without a penalty is no law at all?—I suppose so.

54. Well, suppose this man did decline to join, what would happen?—So far as I am aware, the company has never gone to extreme measures in cases where men did not join.

55. Can you account for the almost universal consent to a compulsory requisition of this kind? Is it a fact that the men have the impression, whether rightly or wrongly, that "must" does mean enforcement, and that the logical consequence would be, if they declined to join the society as required by Rule 5, that they would sooner or later forfeit their employment? Is there such an impression in the minds of the men?—It might be so. I cannot, of course, give evidence as to impressions.

56. Granting that you have heard nothing of that kind, would it not be a reasonable inference from Rule 5?—Exactly.

57. Then, that accounts for the almost universal consent?—It may be so.

58. *Mr. Fisher.*] To complete the question relating to Mr. McLean's statement that the company intend to retire from all position of control in regard to the benefit society, and to leave matters as purely voluntary with the men themselves, you are secretary of the benefit society: have you sent out by letter or circular any intimation to the members of the benefit society of the intention of the company to withdraw from all control in connection with the society?—No; I have not done so, because I have no official intimation from the company to that effect.

59. *Hon. Major Steward.*] When is the society's next annual meeting?—In November next.

60. I think it is provided in the rules that the rules cannot be altered except at a general meeting?—Yes; but the rules also provide for special general meetings.

61. You are aware that one of the rules (Rule 23) provides that the committee shall consist of six elected by the men and six appointed by the company, with the managing director *ex officio* a member?—Yes.

62. The company, then, cannot withdraw from its share of the management without an alteration of that rule?—I do not think so. I do not see how it could.

63. Then, if no special meeting has been called for the purpose of considering such an alteration, it cannot be possible to alter the rules without the consent of the men?—I do not see why it cannot be; the company may intend to propose it.

64. How is it possible, until that rule is altered, for the company to do anything of the kind? That is what I want to know. These rules have been adopted by the men as well as by the company. They have the right to vote, and, if the majority of the votes at the general meeting are against it, alterations of the rules cannot be carried?—No.

65. Then, what would be the company's way of enforcing its own view in the matter?—I cannot speak for the company.

66. *Mr. Fisher.*] This statement is promulgated to the public of New Zealand by means of a leading article in the *Otago Daily Times*: "The company has intimated its intention of doing at the end of September that which it has all along expressed its intention of doing—retire from all participation in the management as soon as the society could go alone, and make it then a purely voluntary association, like any other friendly society." You say you are secretary of the society, and that you have no knowledge of any intention of the kind?—I do not say I have no knowledge of any intention; I have no official knowledge; but I believe the company has that intention.

67. You have no official intimation?—No.

68. And it follows, therefore, that the members, who receive all official intimation through you, have also had no official intimation?—No; I believe Mr. Mills, at the last annual meeting, or the one before, stated so in the address to the members—that eventually he hoped to have matters so arranged that the company could retire from the society, and leave it in the hands of the men.

69. I put this to you—I have no feeling in the matter: This statement is given forth in an influential newspaper, and the public reading this are entitled to believe it is correct, and you, as an official representative of the society, have no official intimation whatever of this intention?—Except