

163. *The Chairman.*] You passed a medical examination?—Yes.

164. Did you ever hear of any other man who joined the society without passing the doctor?—No. I know of a case of a man who wanted to join, but could not because he belonged to another society. At first I believe there was some coercion on joining, but not now.

165. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Was it this: that they gave preference in employment to people who were members of their society?—Well, all the members believed so. For my part, I was ashore for five months, and I saw a man who did not belong to the society shipped before me; so in my case it was not that.

166. No preference was shown?—Not in my case.

167. Are you pretty familiar with the rules?—Yes; but there have been some alterations.

168. Can you tell me if there is any limit of age at which a man can join the society?—I do not think there is any limit, but there is a limit in the contributions from fifty to fifty-five; but the rules do not state up to what age.

169. Do you know if a man would be accepted if over forty years of age?—Yes; I am sure of it. I know a man in the “Omapere” who joined at fifty or fifty-five.

170. Does that same rule obtain now—that a person at fifty or fifty-five can join the society? You spoke of alterations in the rules. Has that been altered?—No; but the table in the rules states that from fifty to fifty-five members shall pay a larger subscription.

171. *Mr. Fisher.*] What is your contribution?—My contribution is 5s. a month. Of course, at the time I joined, when I was thirty-two years of age, I contributed 4s., and 6d. for medicine. I got married, and then had to pay 6d. more for wife and family—that is 5s. a month.

172. *The Chairman.*] Have you ever known of a purser going round and inspecting the contributions of the men and seeing that they were marked off in the books? You always paid in cash?—Yes; I always paid cash. On pay-day the purser gives me my £8 and asks me if I contribute to the society. I say “Yes,” and he asks me if I will contribute now, and he marks it off in the book.

173. *Mr. Fisher.*] Do you know when the last meeting of your society was held?—Not very long ago, but I do not know the date.

174. Were you present?—No; I was at sea.

175. Has the Union Company intimated to members of the society, by means of letter or circular, notice of its intention to retire from the active management of the society?—No.

176. Or that the Union Company would retire and make it a purely voluntary association?—I have had no notice of that.

177. *Hon. Major Steward.*] How is the society managed at the present time?—There is a committee, half of which is elected by the crew—by the engine, deck, and stewards’ departments—and the other half is elected by the Union Company. The chairman, I believe, is Mr. Mills, the managing director.

178. How many are there on the committee altogether?—Six on each side.

179. Those elected by the men and those appointed by the company?—Yes.

180. That is the entire body of management?—Yes.

181. It is managed by a committee on which the Union Company has six representatives and the men have six?—Yes.

182. Do you know what would happen if the votes were exactly equal and the views of the men’s representatives differed diametrically from the views of the company?—The Union Company would carry it, because they have a casting-vote. The chairman’s vote would turn the scale in favour of the Union Company.

183. *Mr. Fisher.*] So far as you know, do the seamen’s members of committee give a fair representation to the views of the seamen, including firemen, &c.?—I believe so. These men do their best. I do not say they would push things too far, because their situations depend upon the Union Company. But I think they do their best, so far as they are concerned.

184. But, as you say, in speaking of the members of the committee, they have to keep an eye on their situations too?—Oh, certainly.

185. How are the elections conducted?—So far the elections have been conducted by proxy; but now, according to a new rule, the voting-papers are issued three months before the election, and sent direct through the boats of the Union Company.

186. Then, a voting-paper is sent to each individual?—Yes; it is individual voting.

187. Do you send them back to the Union Company’s office?—Yes.

188. Are the voting-papers opened at the meeting?—I do not think they are opened before reaching the meeting.

189. It is a sort of ballot?—Yes.

190. Have you any idea why the Union Company’s society does not register—why it should not be made the same as the Foresters or Druids?—That is just my grievance. I have nothing to complain about the society if it were registered. I do not know the reason why it is not registered. Of course, we do not see the newspapers, and we cannot overhaul the papers for a month back to see what has been going on.

191. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Are subscribing members of the society supplied with a copy of the balance-sheet half-yearly or yearly?—Yes, at every half-yearly meeting.

192. Is the balance-sheet audited by any officer on behalf of the society?—I cannot say. Of course we do not notice these things, because we are away.

193. You see, if the society were registered the law would compel them to do that?—Yes. So far as I am concerned, I have derived benefits from this society. I have been ill two or three times, and have got sick-money. I cannot complain about the society so far as I am concerned.

194. *The Chairman.*] Still, you consider it a disadvantage that the society is not registered?—I wish it were registered.