

267. How is it you men differ?—That is easily said; you take one view of a thing and another gentleman takes a different view of it. If you take my evidence right through you will see I have told the truth right through. This man might say what he likes, but what I have told you is the whole truth. When I am answering a question I cannot help but tell the truth.

268. *The Chairman.*] You remember the formation of the society?—I do; thoroughly.

269. Do you know the reason why the society was instituted; was it just to help the seamen?—I cannot tell you the reason.

270. What I mean is, when there were so many societies already in existence—and this benefit society does not seem to offer any particular benefits beyond the other societies—what was the reason for starting a new one?—I have not the slightest idea.

271. Can you tell us the names of any other members of friendly societies who also belong to the Union Company's benefit society, either a man who belonged to a friendly society and left it to go to the Union Company's society or men who have kept up their payments to a friendly society and joined the other too, like yourself?—Wackeldine is supposed to belong to the Foresters.

272. But he does not belong to the Union Company's society?—No; because he was a member of another society.

273. *Hon. Major Steward.*] On the other hand, they refused to allow you to take advantage of your membership of another society?—There is a different rule now. There is a lot of difference.

274. The rule now is that any member of a friendly society is not required to join the company's society?—Yes; but six years ago it was a different thing altogether.

275. *Mr. Fisher.*] You do not occupy any office in the Union Company's benefit society?—No.

276. Who represents you on the Board, or whatever it may be called?—Well, there are supposed to be six out of the Union Company's boats to represent us, and there are supposed to be seven of the Union Company's officials to represent the company, making a committee of thirteen. I do not know what number makes a quorum, but I know this much: that the treasurer, secretary, chairman, and auditor all belong to the Union Company. We have a very infinitesimal representation on that Board. Mind, I am not telling you it is really a fact, because I am not positive, but it is very near it.

277. But you can tell me, so far as you are able to judge, do your members fairly represent the views of the seamen on that Board?—Well, that is a very momentous question to answer, because I am not in a position altogether to be Judge and jury on that affair. I would not care about passing a verdict on that; it is a very delicate thing. It does not matter what I think, but I would not be warranted in saying we had not fair representation.

278. *The Chairman.*] You mean that the sailors or firemen would be overawed?—No; I would not take it upon myself to say so.

279. But you think so?—It does not matter what I think; I would not say so.

*Mr. Fisher:* You see that is our difficulty.

*Witness:* I might answer for myself individually, but if you look at the thirteen men collectively it is a different thing altogether.

*Mr. Fisher:* You see we want to get at, if we can, your real opinion. If you will not give us your real opinion we cannot help it; the fault is not ours.

280. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Suppose we put the question this way: Are you satisfied with the representation you have on the committee of management?—Yes; I think so. I am thoroughly satisfied personally, but collectively—that is a different question.

281. *Mr. Fisher.*] Suppose some crucial, some difficult question were to arise on that Board, whose views do you think would be predominant? Do you think you would get a fair decision from your six and the seven who represent the interests of the Union Company only? How do you think some difficult point affecting the interests of the men as against the interests of the Union Company would be determined? It is a difficult question to answer for two reasons. In the first place, these men depend upon the Union Company for their job, and if they do not go in favour of the Union Company it is only a question of time whether they will remain there or not.

282. *The Chairman.*] You see, we look at it entirely from this point of view: Suppose there are thirteen men on the Oddfellows' committee, and the point under discussion is in reference to the investment of funds. Now, in the Union Company's society there are thirteen committeemen: Would you have the same confidence in the unbiassed opinion of the thirteen of the Union society as in the thirteen of the Oddfellows' committee?—No; I would not.

283. *Hon. Major Steward.*] The reason being, as I understand, that they have of necessity to regard their own positions as servants of the Union Company as well as the merits of the question at issue. There are two things to be looked at. If I ask you a question it might turn a different way when you answered it. I am trying to tell you as near as I possibly can the straight thing as far as I know myself.

284. Can I put the question in another way: Is the committee as at present constituted in a position to give an unbiassed judgment?—I would think so. I do not see why they should not.

285. *The Chairman.*] Do you not think it would be an advantage if the society were registered?—I think it would be better. I do not see anything wrong with the society; but if it was registered I would be satisfied. Thousands of young men who do not belong to any society appreciate the chance of joining our society.

KENNETH McLEAN was examined on oath.

286. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am a sailor on s.s. "Waihora."

287. How long have you been in the Union Company's service?—About four years.

288. When you entered the Union Company's service did you join the society?—I was given a card to go and see the doctor, and got passed.