

35. *Mr. Fisher.*] Can you say of your own knowledge whether pressure has been brought to bear upon any other employes in the company's service to join the society?—I would not say for certain. I believe there has been, but I would not swear to it.

36. *The Chairman.*] The compulsion you speak of is that if they did not care to join the society they could not get work?—I would not say what the alternative is. I have heard lots of talk about it, but there is nothing of my own personal knowledge I could swear to.

37. Did you ever hear of any man who belonged to any friendly society such as the Druids or the Foresters leaving such society to join the Union Company's society?—I do not remember any case.

38. Do you know of any man who belongs to the two societies—the Union Company's and a friendly society?—Yes.

39. Can you give the names of any men?—I cannot give the names. I know them by sight, but I cannot remember names. I have a bad memory for names; not that I fear to bring any names before the Commission.

40. All we should want with such names would be to ask the men to attend and give evidence?—Yes.

41. *Mr. Fisher.*] You said you inquired what the objects of the society were. What, in your opinion, was the object of the company in forming the society?—That I cannot say. It was formed years before I joined the company. I think the real idea was that it was to be a benefit to the men, but there may have been something else at the back of it which I cannot say.

42. *The Chairman.*] How is your subscription paid?—Monthly.

43. You draw your pay from the purser and then pay your contribution back to him?—Yes; and in boats that do not carry a purser the chief officer is paid.

44. *Mr. Fisher.*] You say you have known of cases which did not come within your own knowledge where pressure was brought to bear to get men to join the society?—I have not said so. I have said I have heard of them, but did not know of them personally.

45. You do not know of them of your own personal knowledge?—Only from what I have heard. The single men have told me at times that pressure was brought to bear on them, but when I asked them to give me a statement in writing to that effect, and offered to bring the matter up and see it through, they would not go any further. They always refused to carry the matter to a head.

46. Well, do you believe, so far as your belief will carry you, that there was justification in the mind of those men for the complaint?—Well, I would not like to swear to it; I can only take the men's word.

47. *Hon. Major Steward.*] All you know about it is what you have been told?—Yes.

48. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell us why the men came to you, and why you said you would endeavour to have the matter put right?—Yes. I have taken an active interest in the society, and have been at some of their meetings, and have moved that certain rules be altered.

49. *Mr. Fisher.*] Did you ever know of a case like this: The men on one ship being all called into the smoking-room and the society's rules and regulations read out to them, and being told they must join?—Not within my own knowledge, but I heard of that from one of the men. He was a member of that boat—I think the "Mararoa." It seems he was one of the members of the crew at the time. That was the first I ever heard of it. That was about three months ago.

50. But surely you must have some general idea of specific instances where pressure, coercion, or influence was used in regard to the company's men to compel them to join the society? Have you any general idea as to that?—No; I could not say for certain. It might be in other cases; it is not so in mine.

51. Surely you have a general idea?—It is simply this: I am on my oath, and if I tell you what the men tell me it might be the truth or it might not, and I would not consider that fair evidence.

52. Then, so far as you know, the society might have been established from purely humanitarian motives?—Yes; I take it to be that now, since I have taken a more active interest in the society.

53. Then, do you not think it very unkind on the part of the Union Company, if that society was established from purely humanitarian motives, for Mr. McLean to have said to this Commission yesterday that after the 30th September next no influence or pressure would be put upon the men to make them join the society?—Well, perhaps Mr. McLean knows whether pressure has been brought or not. It has never been brought to my direct knowledge. I do not consider that Mr. McLean ought to be believed before any other man.

54. Is it your opinion at this present moment that men can join or not as they please?—My own opinion is that with any new members joining the company it is optional with them whether they join the society or not.

55. I only wish to ask the further question on that point because Mr. McLean said it was not so?—I take it from the papers that he refers to the concessions granted to the Seamen's Union.

56. This report (meaning the report of the sixth annual meeting of the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand (Limited) Mutual Benefit Society, a copy of which in leaflet form had been obtained from the Union Steamship Company for the information of the Commissioners)—I expect you have seen it—tells us that the membership of the society is now 860. Can you supply us with the additional information as to how many men there are in the fleet?—No.

57. Are you a member of the Seamen's Union?—I decline to answer that question. I do not think I should be asked it, and I strongly object to answer.

58. Have you received any official intimation either by word of mouth, by letter, or by circular of the intention of the company to withdraw from any share in the control of the society after September next?—None.