108. Is that since they gave notice about suspending payments?—It is since the last reduction—I think, about the latter end of 1893. This man is doing odd work in the harbour; and the other man only left the "Brunner" a little while ago to go on the dredge, which is a better job, as he would be home every night. Both of these men were on the "Rotorua" the same time as I was.

109. *The Chairman.*] Is there anything more?—No; that is all I have to say.

110. *Hon. Major Steward.*] You are in favour of registration. I suppose you are aware that some of the men are against registration?—Yes; I see so by the evidence.

111. Do you know what their reason is for objecting?—Yes; I know what the objections of two previous witnesses are: they say the society is in a better financial standing unregistered than registered.

112. Is that not because some of them have got it into their heads that the Union Company's contribution would be withdrawn if the society were registered?—That is the opinion; but I cannot see it.

113. Supposing registration did not involve that, there would be no disadvantage?—None. From what I see, the company take a great interest in this society; and if the society was going to "go to the wall" I think the company would assist it, even if it was registered. I do not think there is anything in the law to withhold them.

114. *Mr. Fisher.*] One keen point, as was well expressed this morning, is this: that while the Union Company is expressing great liberality towards the seamen in the benefit society they are evading all payments for which they are answerable under the Shipping and Seamen's Act, and so, therefore, they could afford to be liberal with your money?—Well, in my opinion, the start and formation of this society was to enable the Union Company to—I will not say evade the law, but, in other words, to save their pockets: I know of dozens of cases myself. I have come ashore myself from the boat. I was ashore eleven days in the hospital, and I got no pay; I had to go to the society, and, of course, a man also goes to the society doctor. I am not referring to any trifling cases of sickness; I am talking of such a thing as a serious accident, brought about by the company's neglect. I know of one case in the "Talune," where the gantling carried away, and the derrick fell and broke the man's leg. He was left in Sydney, but came over two months afterwards. I advised him to go to the marine superintendent for his wages. He went, and was told, "You are drawing from the society; that will keep you while ashore." That man's wages ought to have been paid for two months, owing to the company's negligence.

115. *Hon. Major Steward.*] The Union Company is bound, under one of these rules, to give £500 at the commencement of the society and 20 per cent. on the subscriptions for five years. Now, adding these two sums—the £500 and the 20 per cent. for five years—together, are you of opinion that the Union Company would save by paying these sums as against paying the men their wages and meeting all liabilities in cases of accidents as required by the Shipping Act?—In my opinion, they would save.

116. From your point of view, it is cheaper for the Union Company to pay the subsidy to the society than to meet its liabilities under the Act?—In my opinion, it is. I have known of lots and lots of accidents since I have been on the committee. I have gone to the hospital to see the men, just as a member of another society would visit sick members of the lodge, and that is how I have come to deal with the cases.

117. Then, if your view is correct, the Union Company is not entitled to claim the credit of great benevolence?—The company's case of benevolence is like mine.

118. *The Chairman*] Let me strengthen that question. We were told that the general impression abroad was that this society was started to give the Union Company a better grip over their men after the maritime strike. If there is any truth in that, do you not think that the two things together—namely, a better grip of the men and evading both the Shipping and Seamen's Act and the Employers' Liability Act—would pay the Union Company exceedingly well, and make benevolence, as benevolence often is, a paying thing to the donor?—Of course, I know the witness who said that perfectly well; at the same time, I am of the same opinion, because there is not the slightest doubt that a working-man in these days cannot keep up many societies. Of course, the Union Company started their society thinking it would take all the ready money a man has got to spend, and leave him none with which to join the Seamen's Union. I have seen a lot of the workings of the society right through, and I have seen a lot of benefits from it, but still it was our own money that we paid away. When I commenced my evidence what rankled against me so was the statement that the men's representatives were afraid to speak their minds. Far from it; it is our money we are paying away, not the company's.

William Albert Seymour was examined on oath.

119. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—I am a wharf employé of the Union Steamship Company.

120. How long have you been in their service?—About eight or nine years.

121. Do you belong to the benefit society?—Yes.

122. How long?—Since November, 1893.

123. Are you a member of the committee of the society?—Yes.

124. Elected by the men?—No; I was nominated by the company.

125. Have you seen the evidence as it has been printed in the newspapers?—I have taken notice of a little of it; I got tired of reading it all.

126. Have you seen anything in that evidence you would like to add to, or is there anything you would like to refute or correct?—In reference to forcing men to join the society, I do not think we were ever forced, particularly the men on the wharf. We were asked if we would like to join, and three or four of us joined, and some of us did not.