

170. *Mr. Fisher.*] My point is this : Suppose five of the seven on the company's side should join forces with the men's representatives, that would make eleven ; but the other two of the thirteen could snap their fingers at the eleven?—Well, Mr. Fisher will know better than I do on that point. We do not think it as a body. I do not think two would snap their fingers at eight hundred members. I think, by applying to the common Court, we could get an injunction to restrain these trustees from obtaining these funds.

*Mr. Fisher :* That would suit them.

*Witness :* But could not the matter be decided by arbitration?

*The Chairman :* You see, registered societies take a lot of trouble to get their rules registered, and so on, the sole reason being, so far as we can see, to give them a legal position.

*Witness :* I fully understand that, and I thoroughly understand the point you are driving at. I consider what could be done and what could not be done with these funds an open question.

*The Chairman :* Of course, I am only putting an extreme case. I can appreciate your belief in the honour of the men you are dealing with. I am only putting to you the hard law.

*Witness :* I understand that what we would recognise the law would not.

171. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Suppose these two men were drowned together on board ship, and they had wicked heirs, how could you get that money?—I do not know.

JOSEPH McCANN was examined on oath.

172. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—Fireman on board ships.

173. Are you a fireman now?—No ; I was hurt.

174. What is your occupation?—I am a casual worker for the Union Company.

175. How long have you been in their service?—About six years.

176. How long in the benefit society?—Three years.

177. I see you have a bad hand?—It happened two years ago, on the "Manapouri." It happened in turning the gear that is erected for turning the main engines. I was putting the engines round, and I laid my hand on the wheel, and it was dragged right through the cogs.

178. Were you ill?—I was in the Sydney Hospital a month and two days, owing to the loss of blood, and then I was sent to Paramatta. After that I stopped something like three weeks with my brother.

179. Who paid for it all?—The company paid for it, so far as I know.

180. Were you in the society at the time?—Yes.

181. Did you draw your wages when you came back again? Did you apply for them?—I got paid for the month this happened ; that was May, and I was paid up till April. I was paid on the 1st May.

182. Did you get any wages for the time after that?—The society allowed me £1 a week.

183. You did not draw wages?—No. They gave me £1 a week. I was six months ill before I was fit to work, and then I got casual work. After I came out of the hospital I went to the doctor of the society in Sydney, and he told me it would be better not to go to New Zealand, as it was too cold, and that I should stop there until I got strong.

184. How long were you ill after the accident?—Six months.

185. What did you draw in wages from the company during that six months?—I drew nothing whatever. All I got was about £1 a week from the society.

186. You are sure about that?—Perfectly sure. The company gave me nothing.

187. How have you lived since that time?—I admit that the company has been very good ; whenever there was work I always got it.

188. *Hon. Major Steward.*] What was the terms of your engagement?—I was signed for not exceeding six months. I did not take much interest in it at the time.

189. You signed on the ship's articles?—Yes.

190. How long were you on at the time of the accident?—I could not exactly say.

191. Can you give me an idea?—I have not the least idea. They sign their articles for six months.

WILLIAM JOHN WILSON was examined on oath.

192. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am a permanent employé of the Union Company on the wharf at Port Chalmers.

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

194. Do you belong to the benefit society?—I do not.

195. Were you ever asked to join?—Yes.

196. And refused?—Yes.

197. What was your reason in refusing?—I was in one already, and thought that enough to keep up.

198. Have you seen the evidence as reported?—Yes.

199. Is there anything you would like to add to it, or anything in it you would wish to refute?—No ; it is not a thing I have taken any interest in. The only thing I can say, as a shore employé, is that it has been a good thing for us, because we were everlastingly being pestered with subscription-lists to help injured and disabled firemen and seamen, and to bury them.

200. Then, the society has been a benefit in that way?—Yes ; because before it was started every month, when you went for your wages, there was somebody waiting at the door for a donation.

201. *Hon. Major Steward.*] From your experience with the shore hands, do you know whether Rule 5, which requires that men in the employ of the Union Company, whether on sea or shore, are to be members of the benefit society if they are not already members of another society, has been enforced?—I do not know the rules ; I have never seen them.