

67. *The Chairman.*] Did the Union Company issue a circular to officers and engineers requesting them to become members too?—I could not say that. Mr. Whitson could speak on that point. I am not aware of any.

68. Could you tell us what the intention is in regard to cooks and stewards who do not belong to the Seamen's Union? Do they still have to join your society?—It will be optional with everybody; but I think it was the cooks and stewards, or some of them, who were first instrumental in bringing this forward.

69. We were told it was P. McDonald who was the first to start it?—It was disputed between him and McEwan, a cook.

70. And Mr. McInnes, to whom Mr. Mills paid money for formulating the first part of the rules?—Well, I do not think that fact shows that McInnes was the first man to suggest the society.

71. Do you make your seamen, cooks, and stewards, and so on, in your boats plying between Tasmania and Australia, belong to your society too?—I am not sure of that. No doubt, several of them are in the society, but I do not know that they are compelled to join this or any other society over there.

72. Was your society ever associated with the registered friendly society's dispensary?—I think it was.

73. Why was it separated?—I could not say. It is a matter I did not follow at all. I heard, however, that our society got better terms for the men than the friendly societies were able to give. I think that was the reason, but I am not sure. I think, however, you will find that that is the case.

74. There was no compulsion on the part of the friendly societies? They did not make you withdraw?—I am sure about that. There was a dispute amongst several of the societies—one class wanted us in, and another did not. We did not want to cause any dissent among them, and I fancy that is why our society went elsewhere. I would like to say, with regard to the other societies, that I never heard of them objecting to our society because the men who were in it would not join with them. I rather think they helped our society until that famous letter was photographed and sent to every society in the colony. It was after that that the Government took up the Bill dealing with the matter. I think a good many societies were favourable to us.

75. What regulates the condition as to age, &c.—as to why it is impossible for a man over thirty-eight years of age to get work in your company?—I do not think that is the case. I think that one man at fifty is sometimes better than a man of thirty-eight. It all depends on the health and strength of a man.

76. There is no such rule?—I do not know of any.

77. *Hon. Major Steward.*] A perfectly healthy man swore here this morning that he was working for you, and that he left and went to Australia. When he came back he applied to Mr. Kirby for work as a fireman and was refused, as he was over thirty-eight years of age, and as there was a society that would not allow men to go on after that age?—I do not want to say anything against a man, but it is a fact that when once we get rid of some men we do not want to see them any more. You must take into consideration that it is the useless men who make the most noise when they are discharged.

78. In connection with this matter of the Shipping and Seamen's Act, you will have no objection, perhaps, to answer plainly on this point: Section 2 of the Act of 1890 provides for a case of illness and the discharge of a man from his ship, and subsection (2) provides that he is entitled to three months' wages. I think you expressed the opinion that it was desirable often to treat the men much more liberally than that, and that it would be a bad thing for the men if the company stood precisely on the limits of the law?—Yes.

79. Now, assuming that view to be correct, and that the men who are members of the benefit society are provided for in illness by the society, to whose fund the Union Company subscribes, is it or is it not a fact that it is cheaper to the company to subsidise the benefit society than it would be to withhold such subsidy, and to fulfil the requirements of the law with regard to allowances to men?—Well, the two things are quite separate. A man will meet with an accident through his own fault, and we would not be liable for anything in that case, but if the man has been a good servant we might do more for him than the law compels us.

80. If he is a member of the benefit society, would you provide for him or give the society an allowance?—I do not think we take into consideration whether he is a member of the society or not.

81. Then, I will give you a case in point: A man who was a fireman in your employ for some six years was injured on board the "Manapouri," at Sydney, and lost the best part of his hand. The hand was drawn into a winch, and he lost the fingers. It was a man named McCann. He was in the Sydney Hospital, and after he left your service he got nothing from the company at all, though he did get an allowance from the benefit society. Now, if that was a fair sample of these cases, it is natural to put the question as to whether it would be cheaper to the company to subscribe to the benefit society and escape payment in a case of that sort than to take the other course?—I was asking about that case. The man was at the starting-gear. He was working with it in a careless manner, and allowed his fingers to be drawn into the cogs. That was an accident for which no law makes us liable.

82. *The Chairman.*] That is so?—We sent him to the hospital, and paid his expenses for keep there, and then gave him a passage home. If we had allowed him to stay in Sydney to get well we would have paid his expenses. So far as that accident goes, however, it is one that we are not liable for in any way. To follow up what I have already said, you will find that a good deal is done from time to time for the men who are disabled. If there is any light employment open the officers are always told to give it to these men—men disabled in the company's service.