

11. He was not discharged on the grounds he alleged, then?—No.

12. *The Chairman.*] Do you not think that the question might very fairly arise in the man's mind as to the cause of his discharge? It is true that is a private report to the company saying he is inclined to drink; but on his own discharge no cause is shown, and naturally he would search his mind for some reason, and is it not exceedingly probable that he would conclude he was discharged for not being a member of the benefit society? He does not see that private report?—No.

13. And his discharge says he has no fault?—Yes; but it is a well-known fact among the people on the ships that there is such a thing as a record of their services sent to the company by the head of the department they are serving in. As a matter of fact, every man discharged from the company's service, whether for misconduct or otherwise, knows the reason himself, and in this case Samuels knew he was discharged for being inclined to drink. On that point you will notice that in the "sobriety" column the engineer declines to report. He joined the "Orawaiti" at Westport on the 7th March, 1895—nearly two years later—and this is the engineer's report: "Thomas Samuels was also a member of 'Orawaiti's' crew 7th March, 1895, to 8th June, 1895, when he was discharged at Westport for drunkenness and abusive language." That is the same man two years later, and in a different ship.

14. *Mr. Fisher.*] How did you come to take him into the service again after dismissal from the "Kawatiri"?—It is a rule with the Union Company to give every man two or three chances. It depends on the nature of the offence. If a man is discharged from a ship for drunkenness we give him another show, and put him in a different ship, and if he is discharged from that ship for drunkenness we begin to think he is incorrigible, and we do not care to give him another chance. Every seaman and fireman is employed through me at Dunedin, and I keep a record of every man's ability and conduct throughout the service, and on these reports we deal with them. If we find a man inclined to give trouble on one ship we give him a chance on another ship, and naturally it is not to be expected that the employer can keep him after that. Now, as to Graham's case: He tells you he was discharged from the "Rotokino" for no reason whatever, and says the reason he did not get back into the service was that he was too old to join the company's benefit society, although he was a member of two recognised benefit societies. Well, I can prove from the chief engineer's reports [Exhibit 10] that from the day the man joined the ship to the day he left it at Port Chalmers he was always returned as a non-member of any society, and the chief engineer asked him if he was a member of any society, and he said he was not. I have also a report showing why he was discharged from the ship. It is as follows: "Union Steamship Company, Dunedin, 21st May, 1897.—DEAR SIR,—I beg to report for your information that the reason for discharging W. Graham from the 'Rotokino' was as follows: He was generally insubordinate and careless about his work. Captain Post also suggested that I should discharge him, as he had become a great nuisance both to himself and his officers by interfering in the working of the ship.—Yours faithfully, JAMES FERGUSON, late Chief Engineer, s.s. 'Rotokino.'—John Cook, Esq., Superintendent Engineer, Union Steamship Company, Dunedin." He joined the "Rotokino" at Dunedin on the 14th October, 1893, and was discharged at Port Chalmers on the 26th February, 1896, for the reasons I have read to you.

15. *Hon. Major Steward.*] No report to that effect was made to you until May, 1897?—Yes; I will show you that.

16. This memorandum of discharge was made out about the date of the discharge?—It was made out on the 31st March.

17. That refers to March, 1896?—Yes. He was discharged on the 26th February, 1896.

18. Very well. On the 31st March the engineer certifies that "his sobriety was fair and his ability very good," but on his conduct he declines to report. Then, nothing in the nature of the communication you received on the 21st May appears upon that report except the inferential "decline to report"?—Yes.

19. *The Chairman.*] Witnesses have given evidence to us that the reason for not acknowledging that they belonged to other friendly societies was that they considered that preference in work would be given to men belonging to the company's society. Would not that explain why the man did not acknowledge that he belonged to the All Nations Lodge of Druids and the Protestant Alliance?—No. I do not see how that could fit in very well in this particular case, seeing that Graham is a man nearer sixty than fifty, and must have known that he would not be accepted as a member of the company's society. That fact we do not deny—that a man would not be accepted over forty years of age.

20. And to your mind it was impossible that the engineer's report could be coloured by the idea that generally men who did not belong to the benefit society were distasteful to the company?—No. I have never known of a case in which an engineer got a "set" on a man under him because he was not a member of the company's society; in fact, the engineer only looks for the best men he can obtain to push the ship along; that is all he thinks about.

21. That is a theoretical chief engineer; but if he had a notion that it would be acceptable to his superiors, do you not think it would influence him in his report?—I do not. I think the chief engineers in the Union Company's service are above anything of the kind. These are all reports showing the sole reasons for discharge.

22. *Hon. Major Steward.*] This evidence entirely clears up the matter as regards the man Samuels; but, as regards Graham, there is just one question I would like to put. The only thing that strikes one as somewhat peculiar is that a sort of non-committal report is made by the engineer on the 31st March—a few days after the man is discharged—in regard to the man's conduct, and all he puts are the letters "d. r."—decline to report—whereas it appears from the detailed report which he gave you on the 21st May that the man's conduct had been sufficiently bad to induce him to write something very different to this non-committal "d. r." Now, you say that prior to the 21st May you had been aware, from the chief engineer, of the real cause of the man's