

day, and I find that McInnes and another man—Fitzpatrick—drew up these rules. At any rate, I thought I would ask Mr. McInnes if he knew anything about it, and he said, "Yes; I had something to do with the drawing-up of these rules. The thing was only in its infancy. It had nothing to do with the deck and engine departments, and I believe shortly afterwards McDonald's suggestion came to the front, and being a much larger scheme Mr. Mills accepted it in place of the one we had brought forward." I said, "Who had to do with the drawing-up of these rules?" and he said, "Mr. Fitzpatrick."

81. Then, McDonald's scheme was not the first?—No.

82. You stated that you engage seamen and firemen. Now, cooks and stewards have also to be members of this society. Who engages them?—Mr. Williams, who is now absent in Sydney.

83. Are his powers in regard to stewards and cooks, and so on, very much the same as your power in regard to the sailors?—Yes; more so, in fact, because he is providore steward.

84. *Mr. Fisher.*] Are you a member of any outside benefit society?—No.

85. Do you think this benefit society should be registered?—Well, seeing the opinion of Mr. Sim, I hold that it is on as good a basis as the other societies.

86. We have our opinion about that?—Quite so. That is my opinion.

87. Can you say why it is regarded as a benefit that outside societies should be registered, and the benefits of these particular societies should be registered?—No. I do not see any particular reason why outside societies should be registered, provided they can trust their trustees and officers to the same extent that the members of the Union Company's society can. I do not see any trust in it either, seeing that the Supreme Court has a hold over it, according to Mr. Sim.

88. In your opinion, do the seamen's six representatives on the committee fairly represent the views of the men in the fleet?—Yes; seeing that they have been elected by the majority of the seamen they must; the position is elective, and every one is asked to vote.

89. We had a witness here early in the investigation whose views were generally, if not mainly, in favour of the Union Company's views in regard to the subject of this investigation, and he said this: "In the event of any large or crucial question arising the committee are almost powerless. The representatives of the men are virtually powerless, but not the committee as a body." What is your view as to that?—Speaking as a member of the committee, although the nominee of the company, I always voted in the way I thought was for the good of the society. I was on the committee up to 1893 as one of the company's representatives. The reason I was taken off was that Mr. Mills and the directors thought there were rather many of the company's officials on the committee, and that it did not look well. They thought it would keep down friction if they took the heads of the various departments off the committee, and, of course, naturally, the men would not speak their minds freely.

90. Then, you do not agree with this particular witness on this point?—No. I do not agree with Mr. Bracegirdle on that particular point. I assure you that when I was on the committee I always voted as I thought was for the good of the society.

91. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Was that the general attitude of members of the committee?—I think so. They wanted to make the movement a success, and they did everything to bring it to a successful issue.

92. Look at it from another point of view. The company's subsidy comes to one-fifth. Do you think the men have anything like a fair representation when they contribute four-fifths of the fund, and have only six representatives, while the company, which contributes one-fifth, has also six representatives, besides the casting-vote of the chairman?—If you look upon it in that light, No; they are not fairly represented on the committee. When the society was inaugurated, as probably you have it in evidence already, most people looked upon it as a thing that was not necessary, and the Union Company, knowing it was necessary at the time to have a fairly strong committee, so as to manage the business of the society, thought the time was not then opportune to give the men so much representation as they are going to give them in the future. At the present time they have seven votes on the committee, but I understand it is the wish of the company to hand over the whole control of the society to the men in the near future. And at present, although the company have seven votes on the committee, all their representatives do not attend regularly. Mr. Mills never attends, and the other six, outside of the treasurer and Captain Strang, are really only dummies. They attend meetings at times, but when they do they simply vote as the case may be, but they never say a word. The working of the society is entirely left in the hands of the working members of the committee from the ships, and I understand it is only a matter of time when the whole and sole control of the society will be handed over to the men.

93. Does that handing-over of the whole and sole control mean that the Union Company is going to retire from assisting by subsidy?—I do not know.

94. Because, if they did, would you not have to revise your scale of benefits?—Yes. If the company's contribution was taken from the society I am inclined to think they would have to increase the contributions or decrease the benefits. Of course, I do not know if the Union Company are going to withdraw their contribution. I wish now to go on to Colman's case, who, as you will see, in his evidence and declaration before Mr. Belcher and Mr. Bracegirdle, states, "I was distinctly given to understand by Mr. Ness that all those who did not join the benefit society would be debarred from getting employment." Well, I can prove to you that that statement is not correct. I was with Mr. Ness on board the "Tarawera," and we called all the men together and read the rules to them. We told them that those who were members of other societies, so long as they were financial, would get employment as well as any one else, and to back up that statement I may say there is a man named Atto, who was in the Foresters, who is now in the ship. That man has never been compelled to join the society, and he is still in the ship. He is still a member of the Foresters.

95. *The Chairman.*] Is he a member of your society also?—No. On the 21st May, 1897, a