

96. Now, supposing the 20 per cent. was withdrawn, do you still think the scale would be high enough to provide the benefits?—No; and they do not think so according to the wording of the rules.

97. So, in your opinion, the financial soundness of the society depends on the contribution of 20 per cent. from the Union Company?—Yes.

98. And if the contribution is withdrawn the society must come to grief?—It is not on a sound basis; in fact, they have provided for that in their own rules.

99. Are you aware of any members of your order—the Foresters—having left the order in consequence of joining the Union Company's service and becoming members of the benefit society?—I am aware of one man who had to leave the service of the Union Company because he would not join their benefit society while he was a member of our order.

100. What is that man's name?—David Cardno.

101. When did this occur?—I cannot say definitely; I would say, about a year and nine months or two years ago.

102. Are you aware that there is a rule in force now, and I am led to believe was in force at that date, exempting persons who are members of friendly societies from the necessity of joining the benefit society?—According to the rule.

103. Notwithstanding the rule, you say this man Cardno was required to join the benefit society under the penalty of losing his appointment?—He did lose his appointment.

104. Is he available as a witness?—He is not available; he is on the sea, bound for Home, or is in London; but he is a member of our society.

105. He declined to leave his court, and preferred to remain in it rather than join the Union Company's benefit society?—That is hardly the position. It was this way: The man's boat was laid up, I believe, and when he applied for employment again he was told he was not a member of the benefit society. He said, "No, but I am a member of the Foresters." He produced his book to prove he was a financial member, which he says he had previously done on several occasions, and they replied, "Oh, you will have to stand aside." That is the position.

106. They preferred another man who was a member of the benefit society?—Yes.

107. Now, with regard to the Union Company's benefit society generally, supposing that that society were registered, and that all compulsion such as you speak of ceased to exist, would you have any objection to the existence of the society as a registered society?—Not the slightest.

108. Your view is simply that the men who join that organization should be placed on an equally sound and safe position with those joining your society?—That is it.

109. *Mr. Fisher.*] Does this correctly represent one answer you gave—that one member of your order left your society and joined the Union Company's benefit society, but several, being compelled to join the benefit society, have kept up both?—Yes; I would not say compelled to join. I think they joined more through fear than anything else.

110. *The Chairman.*] Or persuasion?—Yes.

111. *Mr. Fisher.*] The action, then, was voluntary on their part, because I was going to follow that question with another—as to whether they had disclosed or concealed the fact that they were members of an outside friendly society when they joined the Union Company's service?—I should think not. I do not see any reason why they should conceal it in any shape or form. I have never heard of anything of the sort.

112. Your evidence is contradicted by the public statements of the company?—That may be so; but I can contradict one of the public statements of the Hon. George McLean, where he says, "The society was once affiliated to the friendly societies' dispensary." They were never affiliated with the dispensary; there could be no affiliation unless they had some say in the management. I was on the board of management at the time, and they simply entered into a contract with the dispensary for the supply of medicines.

113. Here is a letter sent to the purser, "Ovalau": "If Wilson can satisfy you that he was a member of the Foresters before he joined the company's service he need not join our society, but if he cannot do this enrol him forthwith.—13th August, 1895." Does that correctly represent the position of the company?—No; it does not represent their actions.

114. Here is another, to the chief officer, "Ohau": "Cannot admit O. Johnson to the society, as he is a financial member of the Druids." Is your answer to that the same?—Most decidedly.

115. Here is another: "To Purser, 'Talune.'—If Pimley satisfies you that he is a financial member of the Hibernians we do not wish him to join the society.—7th March, 1896." Is your answer to that the same?—Exactly the same.

116. Well, your answer is that this is the company's view given to the public of the position they assume in regard to this matter, but their actions towards the men are entirely different?—Yes; entirely different. I have recently had a case of one of our members who was sick, and the same doctor tendered a certificate both to my court and to the Union Company's benefit society in reference to his sickness. That, I think, will be most conclusive proof that the company was bound to know the man was a member of both societies.

117. What, in your view, was the object in creating this private benefit society?—Well, my opinion is that the Union Company have come to see their way to benefit by it, either financially or by having greater control over the men. I can see no other object.

JESSE HAYMES was examined on oath.

118. *The Chairman.*] You are an officer of a friendly society?—I am minute secretary at the present time of the Ivanhoe Lodge of Druids.

119. How long have you been a Druid?—Nearly seventeen years.