

15. Have you heard any grumbling on the subject of compulsory joining?—Little or nothing. There have been complaints on one or two occasions from one or two, but these, as a rule, benefited most in case of sickness.

16. What was the ground of their objection?—I have never heard that advanced.

17. Do many members of your society belong to friendly societies?—I should say about twenty at a rough estimate.

18. They make no objection to paying to this as well as to their own society?—No; I have never heard any. I belong to another society myself.

19. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Are any employes at present excused under the rules passed in July on the ground that they are contributing to other societies?—Yes; one has joined another society since this rule came into force. No member of another society has taken advantage to drop out.

20. *The Chairman.*] Does the firm pay any subsidy?—None whatever. They have no say in the management. At present the committee consists of four compositors on the *Witness*, two on the *Daily Times*, one from the jobbing-room, one from the stereo-room, and one canvasser.

21. You say the firm takes no interest in the society, and leaves it entirely to the men?—Yes, the management. Of course, they take an interest in it. They like to see it carried on.

22. How do you explain Rule 31, which provides that when any member falls behind with his contribution, and is eight weeks in arrears, the committee have power to cause the management to stop the money?—That rule is obsolete. I would like to explain that from 1879 to 1883 the membership of the society was purely optional. In 1883 a meeting was held, and members decided by a majority of themselves to make membership compulsory, subject to the approval of the management. The management approved of it, and membership was made compulsory, and that was why that rule was passed.

23. Tell me first what compulsory meant in that case?—Well, so far as I know it was never contested. It was generally understood that if a man did not join he left the office. It was never contested; no man was forced to join, although it was generally understood you had to join. That rule is not in force now, and has not been for some time.

24. Do you know anything of the disposal of the funds?—The funds are purely in the hands of the committee, except at the general meeting.

25. Is it left as a sort of floating balance or on fixed deposit?—£50 is on deposit in the *Otago Daily Times* Company; the rest is floating.

26. *Mr. Fisher.*] Was there a strike in the office about eleven years ago?—Yes.

27. How much of the society's funds was in the hands of the trustees at that date?—I cannot tell you; I was not a member of the society.

28. Was there a sum in the names of the trustees?—I presume there was.

29. Have you no idea what the amount of that sum was?—Not the slightest.

30. You have been a member of the society for eleven years: was there a case in the Court in Dunedin—a hotel case—in which there was a charge of gambling, and some of the *Otago Daily Times* compositors were present, and were examined as witnesses during the hearing of the case in the Resident Magistrate's Court?—Yes.

31. What happened to the compositors in the *Otago Daily Times* office; were they punished or fined for giving their evidence?—No; not for giving their evidence.

32. I will withdraw those words: were they fined?—Yes.

33. How much?—£5 each for gambling.

34. How many?—I do not know the number.

35. Would you not have thought that an arbitrary interference with the outside lives of the men?—No, I would not.

36. *Hon. Major Steward.*] You say Rule 31 is in abeyance?—Yes; the manager of the company will not deduct the money.

37. How long has that been so?—About six months, I suppose.

38. Prior to the last six months the manager of the company, on the representation of the committee, would have deducted the amount?—Yes.

39. Has he given you notice that he would not do it further?—Yes.

40. *Mr. Fisher.*] In whose name or names are the funds of the society banked?—In the names of the treasurer and president.

41. Who are they?—Robert Ferguson, a compositor, is president; and Simon Ballantyne, a machinist, is treasurer.

42. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Is the money banked with the *Otago Daily Times* and *Witness* Company?—£50 on deposit with the company.

43. Is there any advantage in banking the money with them rather than in an ordinary bank?—We receive 6 per cent. on the money. They do it purely to oblige us.

44. Would you not get as much on fixed deposit for twelve months?—No. The advantage in depositing with the *Otago Daily Times* Company is this: that we can get it at any time, and can withdraw it at any time.

45. *Mr. Fisher.*] Is there any person in the employ whom you refused to admit into the society?—Yes; so far as I know, there is one.

46. The reason, please?—Well, because he is not a sober man; that is the principal reason. The man was likely to be on the funds oftener than he had any right to be.

47. Then, the society is not charitable and benevolent?—It is purely so.

48. *The Chairman.*] Would you mind repeating what are the actual benefits?—A member gets £1 5s. per week for the first twelve weeks.

49. A doctor?—No.

50. Medicine?—No; it is purely a monetary grant; and in the event of death the wife or representative receives £10.