

195. *Mr. Fisher.*] So far as you know, is there a feeling of contentment and satisfaction amongst the members of this society, and are they pleased at belonging to it?—The men can be divided into two categories—married men and single men. The married men are satisfied with it, and, as for the single men, it is all one to them whether they belong to the society or not. That is my impression.

196. *Hon. Major Steward.*] You think some single men do not see the advantage of making provision for these things?—No; some men have an impression that the Union Company keeps this money in its own hands, and derives the benefit of the interest on the money instead of the society.

197. Some think that the money should be put out at interest, and utilised to the best advantage of the funds?—Yes.

198. *Mr. Fisher.*] Is that one reason why many prefer belonging to a registered society?—I suppose so.

199. Do you know of your own knowledge of any man who, having left the Union Company's service, has received the surrender value of his benefits in the company's society?—I cannot name any man; but I know cases of men who left the company's service and got the surrender value of their contributions.

200. You cannot give any name?—No.

201. But there is no doubt whatever that it is compulsory to join the company's benefit society if you do not belong to another?—Yes, the company expect a man to belong to some society.

202. And compel him to?—Well, so far as I am concerned, I was not compelled. Of course, some men think the opposite way to satisfy their own fancy, and say they have been compelled when there was no compulsion.

203. What do you mean by compulsion?—That a man, if he did not join, would be dismissed from the Union Company's service. Well, when I was ashore for five months I have seen men who did not belong to the society shipped and I still stopped behind. There was no favour in my case; if there had been favour I should have gone before this man.

204. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Then you have seen men taken on, notwithstanding that they did not belong to the benefit society, before men who actually did?—Yes.

205. On the other hand, a man who was in the service and did not join the benefit society and was not a member of any other society would be dismissed?—That is the impression.

206. That seems contradictory?—That is a fact. I can show I have been suspended three months because I was not paying my contributions.

207. *The Chairman.*] As soon as ever you left off paying your contributions you were suspended?—Yes.

208. And you did not get any show for work?—I was promised work. I had to wait; and as soon as I got on a boat I had either to join afresh and pay 10s. entrance-fee or pay the back arrears for five months.

209. Which did you elect to do?—At that time I was suspended three months, and my contributions started again from that time. I was financial all the same, and I would have derived benefits from the society if I had been sick. I paid up two months, and that made me clear.

210. *Hon. Major Steward.*] It was a fine of 10s?—Oh, no; it was the contribution for two months. I was two months in arrears and three months suspended; that made me five months ashore.

211. *The Chairman.*] Why were you ashore?—I left the boat, and then I did not get any work somehow.

212. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Did you leave to go ashore because you wanted to take some other service?—Yes.

213. *Mr. Fisher.*] It is a fact, I suppose, if you belong to the Union Company's society you have preference in regard to employment?—I cannot say that so far as I am concerned.

214. Why were you suspended?—Because I did not contribute during the time I was ashore. I considered it a favour.

215. *Hon. Major Steward.*] If you had not been suspended, as it were, under the regulations of the society, but absolutely struck off the books instead, you would have had to start afresh and pay a higher amount. You were allowed to resume on your old footing from the fact that you had been suspended for three months?—Yes. Of course, I should have had to join at a more advanced age, and the contribution would have been higher.

216. *The Chairman.*] Registered societies very often have a rule providing that when there are surplus funds at any time they should be divided as a bonus amongst the members. Has that been done in the Union Company's society?—No.

217. *Mr. Fisher.*] Is any provision made for a division?—No.

218. What, in your opinion, was the intention of the company in originating this society?—I cannot say. In our regulations it says it is intended to bring about closer relations between the employers and the employés, so that the employés may be more interested in the Union Company's service. But if that is the real reason I do not know.

WILLIAM JOHN COLMAN was examined on oath.

219. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am a fireman on the "Waihora."

220. How long have you been in the Union Company's service?—Six years last May.

221. Do you belong to any friendly society?—Yes; I belong to No. 19, Linden Lodge, Kaikorai, Independent Order of Oddfellows, and have been this last sixteen or seventeen years.

222. You are a full financial member?—Yes; and have been right through.

223. And, of course, you were a member of that lodge before you joined the Union Company's service?—Yes.