

71. Then, would it be well to alter Rule 1?—I do not think any one will bother about it, unless you gentlemen do.

72. *The Chairman.*] We are only getting evidence in regard to these societies; we do not alter rules?—I do not think anybody will trouble about altering them, then.

73. *Hon. Major Steward.*] The only thing to be remarked is that you produce a rule which says one thing and your evidence says another?—That is so.

ROBERT MCCONNELL was examined on oath.

74. *The Chairman.*] You are an employé of McLeod Brothers' firm?—Yes.

74A. What is your position?—I am carter at the present time.

74B. How long have you been in the firm's employment?—I think, altogether, about four years, but I have not been carting all that time.

75. You belong to this benefit society?—Yes; I pay into it.

76. How do you pay into the society? Is the amount deducted each week, or do you pay it yourself?—The firm deduct the amount to save the men the bother of having to get change.

77. The amount is 3d. per week?—Yes; and it is deducted by the mutual consent of the men, to save the trouble of change.

78. There is a rule to the effect that all employés of the firm must belong to this society?—No. There may be a rule to that effect, but it is not carried out, because there are two men in the factory who do not belong to the society.

79. I will read the first rule, which is as follows: "Every man and boy employed by the firm to be contributors to the funds of the society to the amount of 3d. per week each man and 1d. per week each first-class boy and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per week each second-class boy." You see each man and boy employed by the firm has to be a member, although you say that rule has not been carried out?—I know for a fact, because there are two men I know specially who do not pay into the society; and I was told by the secretary twelve months ago that, seeing I had so much to meet—I belong to the Sons of Temperance—if I chose I could draw back out of this society. I said, "No; surely I can manage to pay 3d. per week, and if I do not get any benefit somebody will."

80. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Have you seen any fresh men join the service of the firm during the time you have been employed?—Yes; I have seen men taken on.

81. I notice the following appears at the end of the rules: "The foregoing rules having been passed and adopted at a general meeting held on the 25th July, 1888, we, the undersigned, agree to be bound by the conditions expressed therein." Do you know, as a matter of practice, if new hands are asked to sign the rules?—I do not know of any man who has ever been asked to join the society. I know of one man who heard us talking about the society, and he asked if he could not get into it. We said "Yes," and told him to go to the proper officers, and I think he got into the society.

82. As a matter of fact, are all the employés in the society?—I told you there are two in the factory who I know are not in it.

83. *Mr. Fisher.*] What are the names of the two?—Sutherland, a carter; and Mr. Tinnock.

84. *Hon. Major Steward.*] You heard the first rule read by the Chairman. Can you state, of your own knowledge—you mention two exceptions—whether, with those exceptions, that rule is enforced, or whether membership is purely optional?—I cannot say it is enforced, because I know of those who are not in the society, and I had a chance of withdrawing from it.

85. Could any member go out of it?—Yes, I think so, because the firm have no benefit out of the society. We get a dividend out of it. I have had £1 from it, and once 10s., and another time 5s.

86. How do you arrive at the dividends?—There is a statement usually presented to the men, but I very rarely attend the meetings, as I am on the cart, and have no time. The men have the whole control of the thing, and I have never been at a meeting where I saw any representative of the firm there.

87. You know, as a matter of fact, how they divide the fund?—Well, at the meeting one of the men will propose that there be £1 dividend, and then we find the funds will not run £1, so some one else moves that the dividend be 10s. I understand, if we get 10s., the firm get 10s. too. They get 1s. for 1s., because they pay the same contributions. But the money is in our control, to do what we like with. I think the society is very good myself, and I am very much in favour of it.

88. *The Chairman.*] There is no rule that applies as to age?—Nothing that I ever heard of.

89. Would old men be taken into the society just the same as young men?—Yes. We had one old man who was pretty sick, and we got no bonus that year because of the demands made by him on the sick funds.

90. *Mr. Fisher.*] Would you please give us your own view as to why this society was brought into existence?—Well, as far as I can understand, these boys are in the factory, and the society has been a great help to them, because they do not draw a very great wage, and when laid up on account of sickness it would become very hard on their people to keep these boys were it not for the society. It has been a great help to them; and, as the society terminates once a year, they also get a bonus out of it.

91. Would not the men get equal advantages out of outside friendly societies?—You see, I am in an outside benefit society. I get doctor and medicine and £1 per week out of my benefit society; and I get 15s. a week from this society.

92. If you desired to join two societies, why could you not as well have joined another outside society?—I could not join an outside society for 3d. per week; 1s. per week is the very least, and if I wanted to join another society I would have to pay 1s. 2d. per week.