

recognised and registered?—Well, it is one of those things to which I have not devoted very much thought, because it has been a purely voluntary affair. For instance, would registration put a stop to their philanthropic idea of assisting a member even outside of their particular rules?

*Hon. Major Steward* : Not that I can see.

*Witness* : Well, if it is simply registering these rules as they are, and putting the society on practically the same footing as at present, I do not see why registration should affect it, unless there is something I cannot see at present.

*Hon. Major Steward* : It is probable, I think, that any such measure would only enable registration of societies the rules of which came within certain prescribed limits, as I suppose yours would, and would not allow of the registration of societies in which there was an objectionable compulsory element.

*Witness* : This society of ours has operated so far beneficially for the men, and the thing has worked very smoothly, so that unless registration were going to assist the society I do not see how it can help it.

*Hon. Major Steward* : It might not assist your society, but, while recognising societies such as yours without interfering with them, it would interfere with societies that were objectionable.

*Witness* : I see; and bring them under a proper basis. I do not think registration would affect our society, which was started from philanthropic motives.

28. *Hon. Major Steward*.] The only trouble you would be put to would be to make a declaration?—Yes. The only point I am in doubt about is as to whether we would have to subscribe to certain rules set forth by the Registrar. I have no objection to registration personally, if it is going to do the society no harm.

29. *The Chairman*.] I suppose there might be as much as £100 in the hands of the trustees at the end of the year?—Possibly there might.

29A. Suppose a defalcation was to occur, how would you proceed at present to recover the money?—As you see, there is no provision; it is a matter of faith and honour.

30. I see you have both a burial fund and a sort of surrender value under the present rules?—Yes; that is looked upon as fair. It is looked upon as a matter of equity that anybody leaving the society should receive back a certain portion of what he has paid in—not the full value, but what would probably be his dividend at the end of the year.

JAMES FREDERICK ARNOLD was examined on oath.

31. *The Chairman*.] What is your business?—I am a boot-clicker in the employ of Sargood, Son, and Ewen.

32. Have you been long in that company's service?—For fifteen years.

33. All the time in New Zealand?—Yes; in Dunedin.

34. Do you remember the start of this benefit society?—Yes.

35. Was it formed with the unanimous consent of the men?—Yes; I believe it was formed with the unanimous consent of the employés.

36. Had all the employés a voice in it?—Yes.

37. Have you heard any grumbling or objection to the society since?—Not to any extent. At the first two annual meetings complaints were made with regard to one of the rules.

38. Which one?—The rule making membership compulsory. Upon the first occasion an amendment was proposed that the membership should not be compulsory, and the matter was put to a vote of all present at the meeting. It was decided by a large majority to leave the rule as at present. Upon the second occasion it was decided to take a ballot during working-hours, so that everybody should vote. The amendment upon that occasion was slightly different—it was that members of other benefit societies should be exempt. That also was lost by a very large majority. I tried to get the number who voted, but I find that the secretary has not kept them.

39. *Hon. Major Steward*.] Do you recollect whether the dissentients were only three in number?—I do not remember. I have asked several, but could not ascertain.

40. *The Chairman*.] Are you a member of any other society?—Yes; I belong to the Oddfellows.

41. Do you know of any cases where the compulsory membership of this benefit society has compelled men to leave their lodges?—No.

42. They continue their subscriptions to both?—Yes.

43. *Hon. Major Steward*.] You see the word "shall" is used in Rule 3: is that the only compulsory rule?—Yes.

44. What would be the result of non-compliance on the part of an employé who refused to contribute?—The result, of course, would be that he would lose his employment.

45. How would that happen? Would the society report him to the employers, and would the employers thereupon dismiss him?—Well, of course, there has not been such a case as far as I am aware. When an employé enters the service he is supplied with a copy of the rules.

46. By whom?—By the secretary of the society, who also is clerk for the firm.

47. Do you mean pay-clerk for the firm?—Yes.

48. What does he do?—He supplies every person employed with a copy of the rules, and any new employé does not become a member until he has been in the employment for a fortnight.

49. And the men are paid weekly?—Yes.

50. Then, according to the rules, the first deduction should not take place until the end of the first two weeks?—That is so.

51. Suppose any employé objects to his contribution being deducted, and says, "I want my wages in full," would his wages be paid in full, and the man thereupon dismissed, or would the deduction be enforced?—I could not say. I presume he would lose his employment. I have never heard of a case, and since being aware that I was to give evidence here I asked the secretary the question, and he said there has never been such a case.