

111. Is it from a generous feeling on the part of the men towards the women?—If a woman is sick she receives less benefit.

112. And her earnings are less?—Yes; I think 75 per cent. are young persons and women.

113. You tell us that the bonus of the firm was less than £50 at one time?—Yes; at the commencement. They have paid the £50 since—some five or six years ago. The rules have been altered a little since the start of the society.

114. It is not within your knowledge that the firm has attempted in any way to influence the proceedings of the society?—Not in any way. We have a perfectly free hand.

JOHN OVENS was examined on oath.

115. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am a warper in the Roslyn Mills.

116. How long have you been in that employment?—Seventeen years.

117. You are acquainted with the working of the benefit society?—Yes.

118. Have you a favourable opinion of it?—Yes.

119. Are you a member of another benefit society?—Yes; the Independent Order of Odd-fellows.

120. Are there many members of friendly societies in the mill?—Very nearly all the males, I should say.

121. You have not heard any grumbling about having to belong to another benefit society as well as their own friendly society?—I have never heard any complaint.

122. *Mr. Fisher.*] What would happen to a man if he decided, for reasons of his own, not to join your private benefit society?—Nothing that I know of.

123. *The Chairman.*] Why does the rule use the word “shall”; and the money is deducted?—Yes; but it was the wish of the men that the money should be deducted. I was one of the first to petition for the establishment of the society, although I belonged to a friendly society.

124. *Mr. Fisher.*] What was your object in wishing for the formation of the society?—It was to put a stop to subscriptions, which went round when people were laid up; and we thought it would be a good thing to have a society of our own.

125. *Hon. Major Steward.*] As a matter of fact, you divide all the money not wanted at the end of the year?—Yes.

126. It goes back to the contributors?—Yes. We have had as much as £1 3s. out of £1 4s. back.

127. *Mr. Fisher.*] Has a man, to your knowledge, ever been dismissed from the firm for unsatisfactory conduct?—In what way?

128. In any way. Has there ever been a case of dismissal from the employ?—Never to my knowledge.

129. In regard to the question of registration, do you think it would be an advantage or otherwise?—I do not, because the society terminates every year, and there is no society from the 24th December to the 4th January. All we do is to retain a little money to meet any demand for sick payment during that time.

130. By your own rules, it is illegal to pay that money?—But we pay it.

131. Is there any dissatisfaction or complaint amongst the employés?—None whatever. I have asked Oddfellows, Druids, Foresters, Rechabites, and them all.

ARCHIBALD THOMSON McINDOE was examined on oath.

132. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am a cutter in the New Zealand Clothing Factory.

133. Have you been there many years?—Just over twelve years.

134. There is a benefit society, I believe, belonging to the firm?—Yes.

135. Did you bring a copy of the rules?—Yes [Exhibit 19].

136. There is no prescribed benefit or sick-allowance?—You will notice the society was started in 1880, and it was some time afterwards that it took in the doctor and medicine. We do not have any sick-allowance. All the benefits we provide are doctor and medicine for members, and in cases of distress from want of work, where relief is wanted, the matter is brought before the committee, and such members are granted relief according to what the committee allow them up to £10. We have no weekly sick-pay or funeral fund.

137. Were you in the society when it started?—No; it started seventeen years ago.

138. Have you got a balance-sheet, or could you give us any idea as to how the fund stands?—I have not brought a balance-sheet with me, but I could get you a statement of the finances [Exhibit 20]. There are two funds—our own and one with Mr. Hallenstein. At the start of the society Mr. Hallenstein gave a subsidy, I believe, but I do not know that. Mr. Hallenstein gave so much to the fund to start it, but we have not called upon that fund yet; but Mr. Hallenstein pays us interest on it. There has been no need to draw on it yet, because we have enough in our other fund. It is a sort of reserve fund, and, I believe, amounts to some £230. Our own funds at the end of December amounted to £164 odd.

139. So there is about £400 in the hands of the firm belonging to the society?—Yes.

140. Are these the rules at present in force?—Yes; these are the only rules we have, but there is an addition in reference to the doctor and medicine. Nothing is said about that in the rules; the addition is only recorded in the minute-book.

141. You have no other regulations apart from these rules?—Nothing that I know of. There has been another alteration in regard to the date of the general meeting; that has been altered from May to July. There are no other rules that we go by.

142. I should like to know from your own personal knowledge if there has been any grumbling amongst the employés about this society?—I have never heard any serious grumbling.