

143. Every employé is bound to join?—Yes; every one joins when they enter the service. I have never heard of any grumbling.

144. *Hon. Major Steward.*] What would happen if they did not join?—I do not know. The question has never cropped up. When I joined I took it as a matter of course.

145. How are the subscriptions paid?—They are deducted from the wages. It would be pretty hard work to collect them all every week; somebody would have to go round to every member. The subscriptions are just deducted in a lump-sum when the wages-book is going in, and the employés are paid 6d. short. The subscription is 1½d. a week, or 6s. 6d. a year.

146. How many employés are there in the factory?—The number varies; but on an average I suppose there are about two hundred and fifty.

147. That is the number of members of the society?—Yes.

148. There appear to be two funds—one originally set aside by Mr. Hallenstein and one which accumulates from the contributions of the employés. Now, all moneys are banked with the firm, and money is withdrawn on cheques signed by the president and secretary. Have these officers the right to operate upon the reserve fund, which represents Mr. Hallenstein's contribution, as well as upon the ordinary funds of the society?—I do not know that we could while we have funds of our own. The committee have power at any time to amalgamate the two funds.

149. But they are kept as two distinct funds, and in the meantime your cheques are only issued as against your own money?—Yes.

150. In the event of that fund not being sufficient to meet the requirements you cannot operate upon the other fund without the sanction of Mr. Hallenstein?—Oh, I think so.

151. *The Chairman.*] Do you see anything in any of the rules that enables you to get your money back if you wanted it? What power have you over the £400?—Only the power to draw if any one were to claim relief. Suppose all the factory were to claim relief, their application would go before the committee, and we could will away the whole of the money.

152. Suppose, owing to distress amongst the members, you drew a cheque for the whole amount that stands to the credit of the funds, being altogether about £400, would that cheque be drawn on Hallenstein and Co., and be payable to bearer?—As our bankers, yes.

153. Suppose they declined to honour the cheque?—I could not say. I do not think we would have power to draw a cheque above £10, because one of the rules says no members shall receive more than £10 in one year.

154. Suppose you wanted to get these funds and distribute them, that you held a meeting and carried a resolution that the funds be withdrawn by the president and secretary, and a cheque was made out for the amount standing to your credit, would Messrs. Hallenstein, as your bankers, honour that cheque?—I do not know.

155. Do you belong to a friendly society?—Yes, I am in the Rechabites; and three of the men on the committee are all in friendly societies.

156. I suppose most of your adult members belong to friendly societies?—Yes.

157. Apart from the temperance element, the Rechabites is a benefit society?—Yes; it is on the same footing as the Foresters and Oddfellows.

158. You get certain benefits from the Rechabites?—Yes; I get doctor and medicine, and in case of sickness I get £1 a week for twelve months, 10s. a week for six months, and 5s. a week for ever, and £30 for funeral benefit.

159. *Hon. Major Steward.*] For which you pay how much?—15s. 3d. a quarter.

160. In this case you pay 1s. 6d. a quarter?—Yes.

161. Now, there is no fixed scale of benefit for that 1s. 6d. a quarter; it simply depends upon the committee?—Of course, there is doctor and medicine.

162. The committee can even give funds for those unemployed, suppose the persons are out of work?—Yes, they can do that. I have only been secretary for about twelve months. I was not on the committee before that.

163. You have attended the annual meetings?—Generally.

164. Do you happen to know if the reserve fund is increasing? Is it larger than five years ago?—During the last five years I think it has been increasing slightly. It all depends whether the year is a bad one or not. Sometimes the relief granted will go pretty high, and sometimes it is low. During the last ten months I think about £17 or £19 have been given in relief. This is outside doctor and medicine.

165. Is it not increasing very largely?—No, not a great deal, and if it was not for the interest given by the firm we would not have enough to keep us going. If membership were not compulsory we could not keep going.

166. *The Chairman.*] What sum has Mr. Hallenstein paid?—There are £230; I cannot say exactly.

167. *Hon. Major Steward.*] How does it come up to that sum now?—He has added to it from time to time.

168. What rate of interest does the firm allow you?—We get 5 per cent. We had 8 per cent. up till 1894, but then interest came down.

169. *The Chairman.*] What does Mr. Hallenstein get for doing this?—He gets nothing. They have nothing to do with the society, apart from being our bankers. We never come in contact with them, except when the president goes with the cheques.

170. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Have you any life-members under Rule 5?—I do not think so.

171. *The Chairman.*] Are there any cases of people getting hurt slightly, and being laid up for several weeks or so?—I do not remember any accident. Unless as a member of the committee, we would not know who was getting relief. Only the committee knows that.

172. Have you been on the committee long?—Only ten months.

173. There have been no cases in that time?—No accidents. There was a girl who dropped dead in coming to work; her people were very badly off, and the committee voted a sum towards her funeral expenses.