

174. What did the firm give?—I could not say whether they did anything. Their aid would not go through our fund. Then, there was a girl out of work through illness, who applied and got something. If any one makes an application to the firm, they send it in to the committee, and two of the committee are sent to see how they are off, and relief is allowed, according to their recommendation, up to £10, which is our limit.

175. *Mr. Fisher.*] Why, according to Rule 20, are moneys banked in the name of the firm?—You see, they are our bankers.

176. You mean, they collect the moneys and do all the financial business?—They are our bankers, and pay us interest, just as an ordinary bank would.

ADA FLORENCE WHITEHORN was examined on oath.

177. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am a tailoress in the employ of the New Zealand Clothing Factory.

178. You belong to the benefit society in connection with the factory?—Yes.

179. I want to ask you what is the general tone of feeling amongst the women workers in regard to this society: do they look upon it as a benefit or not?—As a decided benefit.

180. I suppose a great many cases of sickness and poverty have been relieved?—Yes, a great many.

181. How long have you been in the society?—I should think, about seven years.

182. *Mr. Fisher.*] The rules say you must join?—Yes; I believe that is one of the rules.

183. Does there arise out of that any feeling of discontent amongst the employés?—I have never heard any discontent expressed.

184. *The Chairman.*] You do not know what would happen if they said they would not join?—I have never known of any case in point.

185. You belong to the Tailoresses' Union?—I do.

186. Is there any benefit society connected with that?—Yes.

187. So you have two societies to keep up?—Not at all; you do not pay into the union benefit society. There is no charge at all for that.

188. The benefits, according to the rules of the society, seem to be almost left to the benevolence of the committee. I understand from the last witness there is just doctor and medicine?—That is all; but if there is a case of any one in poor circumstances, and they write to the committee, the latter inquire into the case, and if it is a deserving one they give relief to the extent of £10. The funds will not allow us to give very much. The charge is only 1½d. a week.

189. I suppose it does a great deal of good to the women and young people, because men can belong to other societies?—Yes; it has been of great benefit to the girls.

190. You have never heard any grumbling at having to pay the subscription?—I have never heard any discontent about having to pay into it.

191. How is your money paid into this society?—We pay 6d. a month.

192. Do you receive your wages first and then hand the subscription back?—It is deducted before you get paid.

193. *Hon. Major Steward.*] That is by arrangement with the employers?—Yes.

194. In addition to the ordinary fund, there is an endowment or subsidy fund given by the firm?—We draw interest from that.

195. All these moneys are banked with the firm?—Yes.

196. And it appears that cheques can be drawn upon the firm for payments authorised by the committee?—Yes.

197. I asked the previous witness, but he did not seem to be able to answer the question, whether the committee, through the president and secretary, could operate upon the firm's fund, as I will call it, as well as upon their own?—Oh, yes, they can do that. I understand so.

198. Supposing, then, for some reason or other, the whole of the employés should make up their minds to terminate this particular society, and divide the funds that had accumulated, and instructed their president and secretary to draw a cheque for the total amount standing to their credit—suppose the firm differ from the committee as to the expediency of dissolving that society, and would not honour that cheque: what would the members do to carry out their own view?—I could not say. I have never thought about it.

199. *The Chairman.*] I suppose the women workers are not represented on the committee?—Yes; I was a member of the committee for some years. There are three or four women on the committee.

200. That is very necessary when the affairs of women and children have to be investigated?—Yes; it was for that reason women were put on the committee.

201. You never had to overdraw the funds of the society?—No.

JANE ELIZABETH RUNCIMAN was examined on oath.

202. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am a tailoress in the employ of the New Zealand Clothing Factory.

203. How long have you been there?—I was a year last February.

204. You know something about this benefit society; have you been on the committee?—No.

205. When you joined the benefit society were you told you must join?—No.

206. The first thing you knew about it was having a deduction made from your wages?—I knew, of course, about it before. You know there is a benefit society before you go to work there.

207. You were never told officially by Mr. Hallenstein?—No.

208. When you received your first week's pay, was there some small deduction made?—No; it is just made once a month.

209. You go about amongst the girls: do you hear any grumbling about having to pay this money?—No; they all think it is a very cheap benefit.