

237. These rules are now in force?—Yes; but there are some of them which have never come into operation.

238. There is no mention of medicine or doctor?—No; when these rules were drawn up there was no thought of doctor and medicine. They were introduced some years after.

239. It was the intention that it should be a relief society administered by a committee?—Purely and simply a relief society. At the time it was the custom, in the case of any employé in bad circumstances, to send a subscription-list round the factory, and collect money for him. In a shop like ours there are some who are in very hard circumstances, and, of course, we had to do something. This came very heavily on the men, some of whom could not afford it, although no man could refuse to put his name down for something.

240. *The Chairman.*] I suppose they were incessant?—I was only a boy at the time, and they did not all come to me, but I contributed towards some of them. Since the fund was started no subscription-list is allowed to go round the factory, according to the rules.

241. *Hon. Major Steward.*] There is a rule—Rule 20—which provides that you, as president, and the secretary shall operate upon the fund by cheque. You do not seem at all clear whether you can operate on that portion of the fund which represents the contributions of Mr. Hallenstein, but you are quite clear you can operate upon the fund contributed by the members. We have it from the previous witness that the fund stands at £167. Now, supposing, for reasons of their own, the employés decided to wind up this society and divide the funds, and you and the secretary were instructed to draw a cheque for the whole amount of the fund; and supposing the opinion of the firm differed from the opinion of the employés, and they thought it was not desirable to wind up the society, and on that ground they declined to honour your cheque, what could you do?—We could do nothing.

242. That being so, do you or do you not think it would be an advantage if a private benefit society such as this could be registered under some Act of Parliament which would enable you to carry out your wishes?—I was not on the committee at the time, but I believe they did write to the Registrar at Wellington to try and register, but I think the Registrar would not accept it on account of the rules.

243. Supposing an Act were passed to enable a society with rules like this to register, would it not be an advantage to enable you to legally enforce your rules?—Of course, it would be so if we could draw our own money. Of course, the contributions are not sufficient to keep the society going—the firm have practically kept the fund going. A large amount of it is firm's money, because they afterwards paid us more than the current interest. You see, we draw interest daily.

244. *Mr. Fisher.*] The point is this: Who controls the fund?—The committee have full control over the fund.

245. *Hon. Major Steward.*] It is evident from a previous answer which you gave that you or the members of your committee desire legal recognition if they can get it with the existing rules?—Yes.

246. I therefore follow that up by asking, if Parliament should devise legislation to enable you to register with these rules, would you not take advantage of it?—Yes; and, in my opinion, the firm would have no objection to it.

247. *The Chairman.*] Do you know who suggested this society?—The committee, with the exception of Mr. Anderson, now dead, who was manager of the factory then, were all workmen, and Mr. Anderson had no connection with the firm. He was the first president, but only held office for one year, and ever since that anybody who stood for the presidentship could get it.

248. During the time you have been in the factory has there been any case of accident which would take an employé three or four weeks from his work?—No accident. The only accident I can remember all the time I have been in the factory was a boy falling down the lift, and that was through carelessness. He broke his leg, and his case came before the society was formed.

249. *Mr. Fisher.*] Is there discontent or not with the existence of compulsory payments in this society?—No; I have never heard any grumbling. In fact, I do not know where it is compulsory. The warehouse at one time were members of it. There are two to my knowledge who have withdrawn from the society, and one is in the employ now.

PATRICK JOSEPH HELEAN was examined on oath.

250. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am manager of the New Zealand Clothing Factory.

251. How long have you been manager?—Two years.

252. How long have you been in the company's service?—Nearly two years.

253. You went there as manager?—Yes.

254. Have you ever heard the reason why this society was started?—Yes; I think it was through Mr. Hallenstein himself. The employés made him a presentation when he was going to England, and he took the money from them, but gave it back to start this relief fund.

255. Can you tell us how he gave it back, because the last witness thought that the fund, although they got interest on it, belonged to the firm?—No.

256. The money belongs to the society?—Yes.

257. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Can you tell us how the additional £37 10s. was arrived at?—It was an additional sum given by the firm.

258. Then, there is also the working account of the society, which arises from the contributions of 1½d. per week, and the amount to the credit of which appears to be something like £176. The president of the society was quite clear that, so far as regards that branch of the fund—the £176—or any portion of it, the money could be withdrawn by cheques signed by himself and the secretary?—Yes.

259. They would be honoured up to the amount standing to the credit of the fund?—Yes.