

leave the employ of the firm. We found that several cases of sickness occurred quite beyond our control. We had no means of finding out whether they were sick or otherwise, and we thought we should make it a rule that when they dropped out of the employ of the firm they should drop out of the society also.

50. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Should not Rule 13 be repealed or altered, then?—That is an error on my part. I will forward you a correct copy with the amendment.

51. As the fund is now continuous, it is very necessary that it should be audited from time to time: is it audited?—It is audited at the close of every year.

52. Are the auditors elected by the members?—Yes.

53. From among members or from outside the society?—From the members. I believe at the present time one of the auditors is outside the society.

54. If you get an outside auditor, do you pay him anything, or is it a labour of love?—A labour of love, as a rule; it is optional whether we pay him or otherwise.

55. You might be able, under these rules, to fine a member for neglect of duty as auditor, but I do not see how you could fine an outside auditor, who is doing the work for nothing?—As a matter of fact, we cannot fine any man at all. Suppose we fine a man, and he says, "I do not intend to pay the fine," the only thing left open to us is to expel the man; but what does he care?

56. You see, then, that one advantage of registration would be that you would be able to enforce your rules?—Yes.

57. *Mr. Fisher.*] Two witnesses in Dunedin said—one that if a man refused to join the society he would be reported to the manager or managing director, and the other that if a man fell in arrears with his subscription he would be reported: is there anything of that kind in your case?—None whatever. If any reporting is to be done it is reported to the secretary of the society, and he calls the committee together, and the committee deal with the case themselves.

58. *Hon. Major Steward.*] As a matter of fact, there is absolutely no connection between the firm as such and the society?—None whatever.

59. Only I suppose you may call it a connection if they give you a voluntary contribution from time to time?—Yes; they are in the habit of making us a present every year of £5.

60. That is merely at their own option?—Yes.

61. *Mr. Fisher.*] Have you ever heard any complaint amongst the men in the employ of the firm about being called upon to contribute?—They are not called upon.

62. Has there been a complaint on that score?—If a man becomes a member this week he can leave next week, and he is only asked to pay that week's contribution. Of course, he can refuse to pay it if he likes, and there is an end.

63. *The Chairman.*] You were speaking of subscription-lists continually going round as a great cause for the formation of this society: do societies like this, in your opinion, relieve employers of great responsibility in regard to sickness or accident to men in their service—I mean that, whereas formerly they were continually called upon for subscriptions, now the men keep themselves?—That is true, but in place of that they give us £5 a year. If any employés of the firm were to fall sick, of course the boss would not be called upon to contribute anything; they keep themselves. Of course, formerly we would pay more in the year in subscriptions than in keeping up this society.

RICHARD HALL TURNER was examined on oath.

64. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am general foreman in Skelton and Frostick's boot-factory.

65. How long have you been there?—Ever since they commenced business there, about nine or ten years ago. I have been connected with the firm over twenty years.

66. Do you remember the formation of the benefit society?—I do.

67. Can you tell us why the society was started?—One reason for starting the society was to do away with the frequent subscription-lists which were taken round the different departments.

68. That was the main reason?—I think that was one of the main reasons.

69. You do not see any reason why an ordinary friendly society, such as the Druids or Foresters, could not meet the difficulty in this case?—There was no reason why they could not; in fact, several connected with our society are connected with other societies. I was a member of the Druids, and there are several in our employ who are connected and take a prominent part in other societies, such as the Druids, Foresters, and so on.

70. What was the reason, when these friendly societies were already in existence, for starting another one?—I know of no reason given at the time. I really do not think the matter was suggested. Membership in our society has always been voluntary, and it was optional whether those in friendly societies joined our society or not. There was no reason why other friendly societies could not meet the case, but I believe a number joined our society who were not in any other society.

71. Because they considered your society offered special advantages?—I do not think so; we have offered no special advantages.

72. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Would not one reason be that the subscription in your case is smaller than in an ordinary friendly society?—Our limit is 6d. per week for four shares. So far as my memory serves me, it was supposed to be a smaller and more insignificant affair altogether than an ordinary friendly society.

73. Then, again, you take members of all ages and without the necessity of passing the doctor?—Yes, if they are in the employ.

74. A man cannot join a friendly society under a certain age and without passing the doctor?—No; I suppose that would be the case. However, none of these things were put forward, although they might have been in the minds of the men.