

15. Then, £10 is the maximum sum granted, and the committee have discretion to vote any sum up to that amount?—No; every member gets the full amount, and the juniors get an amount in proportion to that.

16. Then, membership in the society is purely voluntary?—Yes; all in the office do not belong to it, only those who wish to.

17. *The Chairman.*] Is there any regular weekly payment to the society, or is it that when a member falls sick a levy is made to the extent of 2s. 6d. per week during illness?—Yes. Supposing a member is sick, and entitled to £2 per week, that would mean 4d. or 5d. per week to the senior members, and perhaps 1d. or 2d. per week to the junior members, which would come to somewhere about £1 14s.; and that amount would be supplemented by the *Press* Company to make it up to £2. There are no weekly contributions, or anything of that kind.

18. As soon as a member recovers the levy ceases?—Yes.

19. And there is really nothing in hand?—No; we never have a penny in hand.

20. *Hon. Major Steward.*] About how many employés are there in the office?—I cannot say—a large number. There are seventy senior and twenty-two junior members in the sick fund.

21. What proportion of the employés become members voluntarily; no doubt there are some who did not join; what proportion does that number represent?—I should think, fully a third; about a third are not members.

22. *The Chairman.*] We have been told that in many cases these societies have been started because of the eternal subscription-lists going round. Now, as some of the employés are not members of the society, of course the subscription-lists will still go round for them?—They are not allowed to go round unless for some very extreme case. In a case of necessity I have no doubt the men in the office would be only too willing to assist.

23. *Hon. Major Steward.*] We will divide the men into members and non-members: suppose a non-member becomes sick, is any voluntary levy made by the members for his case?—No.

24. The benefits of the fund are only for those persons who are contributors?—Yes.

25. Then, the only result of membership falling from two-thirds to one-third would be that the levy would have to be raised in proportion in case of sickness?—The levy is not allowed to exceed 2s. 6d. per week.

26. But it is a varying levy, according to the number of members?—Yes.

27. *The Chairman.*] I notice that the cashier of the company collects the money and pays it to the account?—He pays it to the secretary, and I pay it to the men who are sick.

28. *Mr. Fisher.*] I do not see anything in the least degree objectionable in these rules. The society seems to me to be a purely provident society?—Yes.

30. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Also a purely voluntary society?—No one is asked to join. If a stranger comes into the office no one goes round and asks him to join.

31. The society was initiated by the men themselves?—Yes.

32. The *Press* Company had nothing to do with the matter?—No.

33. *The Chairman.*] Has there ever been any attempt on the part of the company to interfere as to the election of the committee, or anything like that?—None whatever.

34. Can you see any benefit in legislation? Should you think, for instance, it would be a good thing to make it compulsory if the employés of the Christchurch *Press* considered it would be good, so as to bring all in?—I do not know. This seems to work so well in the office, and to give so much satisfaction. Sometimes there may be more members and sometimes less. In an office like the *Press* office there are always some coming and going, and of course the men who come on casually would not think of joining the society.

35. I suppose you have no statement at all as to the amount of levy, so as to give us an idea of what calls have been made on the society?—I have not with me. I get a receipt from each sick member to show the society that I have paid the money over.

36. Can you not oblige us with a statement showing how much has been raised by way of levy?—I cannot state from the time the society has started. I have only been secretary two years.

ALBERT THOMAS WALKER BRADWILL was examined on oath.

37. *The Chairman.*] What is your business?—I am a compositor in the Christchurch *Press* Company.

38. Are you an officer of the benefit society?—I am one of the committee.

39. Have you been in that position for any time?—I think I may say almost since the foundation of the society, about 1883 as it is at present, but it originated before that.

40. Had it a different constitution before that?—No; somewhat similar. I have heard Mr. Robinson's evidence, and perhaps I could give you a better idea of the position. In the department to which I belong, of course there were times when some people fell sick who really could not afford to be out of work, and it was a question of making a levy to help them or going round with a subscription-list. The companionship working in the room then made an agreement amongst themselves to collect 1s. each week from every member, and the "chapel" fund was to supplement it, and give them £1 10s. a week. This went on for several years, and by-and-by the company heard of it, and suggested that the thing should be carried throughout the establishment, and that if it was carried on as they suggested they would be willing to supplement the amount collected by 25 per cent. It began in the composing-room, and we were quite willing to let our affair go, and merge it into one for the establishment. Mr. Robinson told you we can levy up to 2s. 6d. There have been two occasions, I think, when we have levied up to 2s. 6d., and of course it necessarily follows, if the levy is 2s. 6d., and there is not sufficient to pay £2 per week, the sick member gets a *pro rata* share of the levy. The allowance has to be adjusted. Of course, there is nothing compulsory at all, and the employés of the *Press* Company appreciate the liberality of the company in this respect; it is not usual for a firm to make allowances to hands working piecework when they are ill, although they usually do so to those with fixed wages.