

99. Are any of your members also members of other friendly societies?—There are some, I believe, but I cannot say how many. It is a thing we do not ask them.

100. *Hon. Major Steward.*] The explanation is, I suppose, that the bulk of them are young people—too young to join friendly societies?—Some have juvenile lodges, but we take all in except apprentices. You see by the rules we pay them 10s. per week, and a young girl must be earning more than 10s. before she is entitled to receive that 10s., otherwise it would pay better to be sick.

101. *The Chairman.*] How do you generally collect the money?—I receive it every Friday between 4 and 5 o'clock. They come to me; it is never stopped from their wages.

102. The firm never interferes?—Not in the slightest. We do not even ask employes to join; it is optional.

103. *Mr. Fisher.*] Were the contributions deducted during the compulsory régime?—Yes, several years ago; that is, provided they did not pay the contribution. That caused a lot of complaint, because people do not like their wages interfered with in any shape or form.

MARY ANN HEPHZIBAH VIRTUE was examined on oath.

104. *The Chairman.*] What is your occupation?—I am a machinist in the Kaiapoi Clothing Factory.

105. Have you been there long?—About five or six years.

106. You were there at the time the society was compulsory?—Yes.

107. Did you hear any grumbling amongst the workers about it then?—Well, some did not like it very well; and, of course, some did.

108. Was it the result of your experience that it was good whether they liked it or not?—I think it was necessary.

109. And there has been a great falling-off in the numbers of the society since it became purely voluntary?—Yes.

110. You regard that also as an evil?—Yes.

111. And many young persons and girls would have to look after themselves if sick?—Yes.

112. Do you think that these contributions of theirs pressed at all on their wages?—I do not think so; the contribution is very small.

113. Was there anything unpleasant in the way the money was collected?—No unpleasantness whatever.

114. Should you have any objection—do you think the sensible members among the employes would have any objection if membership of the society were made compulsory?—A good many have complained against it. They do not like the idea of being compelled.

115. Even if plainly for their own benefit, because any money that has been over at the end of the year has been given back to them?—Yes, it is divided.

116. *Mr. Fisher.*] It is a case, then, whether wise or otherwise, that they prefer to please themselves?—I think so.

117. *The Chairman.*] There is no interference by the firm at all?—None whatever.

118. Are any superior officers of the firm on the committee, or is it left entirely to the employes?—It is just left among the employes.

119. *Mr. Fisher.*] Who is the present president?—The chairman generally conducts the business.

120. Who is the chairman?—Mr. Banks.

121. Then, Mr. Banks is president and trustee?—Yes.

122. *The Chairman.*] Are women represented on the committee?—Yes; I am one of the committee.

123. I suppose doctor and medicine have to be provided quite separately?—Yes; members provide their own.

JOSEPH CLEWORTH was examined on oath.

124. *The Chairman.*] What are you by business?—I am a presser in the Kaiapoi Clothing Factory.

125. Have you been long in that service?—Thirteen years.

126. You remember this society under the old compulsory clauses?—Yes.

127. It was a fairly well conducted society?—Very well conducted.

128. You think it was generally good to the employes?—I do.

129. Do you consider the removal of the compulsory clauses a mistake?—That is a matter of opinion. I do not believe in compulsory clauses, but at the same time I believe it was for the general good of the employes.

130. If they could be persuaded voluntarily to come in you think it would be a good thing?—I do.

131. I suppose that, most of your employes being young girls and women, there are not many members of ordinary friendly societies among them?—There are a number; a fair percentage of the men are connected with friendly societies.

132. Do you think, as a result of their withdrawal from this society, they are very likely to join friendly societies?—I do not think so; the amount of contribution to this society is really so small.

133. It would not hurt anybody?—I do not think so.

134. *Hon. Major Steward.*] I suppose the effect of the formation of this society has been to relieve you of the nuisance of subscription-lists, which frequently went round before?—Quite so. I think that was one of the principal reasons for starting it.

135. *The Chairman.*] If this society could be continued, and you saw that the present rules could be arranged for by legislation so that they could be registered as they stand at present, would you see any objection to registration?—I do not see any objection. In fact, personally, I am of opinion that all friendly societies ought to be registered, providing our rules could be accepted.