

HENRY GRAHAM SNODGRASS was examined on oath.

119. *The Chairman.*] You were formerly, I believe, a clerk in the service of the Bank of New Zealand?—Yes; for about nine years.

120. How long ago is it since you left?—Six years or more.

121. During the nine years you were in the service you paid into the provident fund?—Yes; into the provident fund I paid 1 per cent. of my salary, and into the guarantee fund altogether £29 10s., for a guarantee covering £1,000.

122. How much would your payments into the provident fund amount to?—I do not know exactly. When I left my salary was £125, and had been for six years; so for the last six years of my service I had been paying £1 5s. a year.

123. Altogether you had paid in about £35?—More; nearer £40 into the two funds.

124. When you left the Bank of New Zealand did you have to leave that behind?—Yes.

125. You got nothing from it?—Nothing whatever.

126. Do you consider that a fair arrangement?—It was not a fair arrangement. If I had had my own choice I would never have subscribed to it. It was compulsory.

127. Do you know of any other cases of men leaving the bank and having to leave sums of money behind?—Yes, I know a large number.

128. *Hon. Major Steward.*] In point of fact, everybody who leaves the bank leaves it behind?—I think it would be easier to count the names of those who have received any benefit from it than those who have not.

129. *The Chairman.*] You have nothing particular you would like to tell us about the fund or about the association?—No; I have left the bank for some years, and am not likely ever to trouble my head again about it, so my interest naturally ceases.

130. *Mr. Fisher.*] We know that a feeling of discontent exists in the bank now in regard to this particular association: was there that same feeling of discontent six years ago?—Yes; exactly the same. When I joined first, in 1882, I had, of course, to join this fund. We looked upon it then as simply a fund that would permit older officers in the service to draw good pensions when they retired at the expense of the juniors who were then joining the bank; it was looked upon as a fund to provide good pensions for the chiefs. There was one point about it which made it really worse than it looked. By the rules the trustees had complete control of the fund, and whatever they decided in connection with any particular case that came up they could do. Members had no appeal whatever from the decisions of the trustees. The trustees were the people who, from their positions in the bank's service, naturally derived the greatest benefits from the fund.

131. Then, the three govern the fund irrespective of the views of the staff throughout the colony?—Undoubtedly; but the staff never had the chance, to my knowledge, of expressing their views.

WILLIAM CALLENDER was examined on oath.

132. *The Chairman.*] You are an officer of the Bank of New Zealand?—Yes.

133. In what position?—I hold the rank of assistant inspector.

134. I believe you are also an officer of the provident fund?—I am a trustee; of course, I am also a member.

135. How long have you been a trustee?—About two years.

136. I believe the power of administering the fund by the deed of settlement is almost entirely in the hands of the trustees?—Subject to the approval of the directors, Yes.

137. I believe the benefits to be derived are almost entirely pension benefits; they are not sick benefits?—I would point out that in the event of disablement there is a clause which provides for such cases. The provision is in Rule 3 of the regulations.

138. That was not exactly what I meant—I mean in the case of sickness; the rule refers to retiring on account of bad health and getting a pension?—Yes, it would only be in the form of a pension.

139. I was alluding more to a man falling ill for three or four months, and getting sick benefits?—No such benefit was ever intended to apply in such a case.

140. In the event of an officer dying before reaching pension age the widow cannot claim his pension, or any part of it?—No, she cannot claim.

141. There is a clause, I believe, that allows the trustees to give it as a donation, but it cannot be claimed as a right?—I do not think it is open to us to make a present to the widow.

142. Does not clause 11 of the regulations give you power “to pay out of the provident fund to such person or persons and in such manner as they may think fit for the benefit of such member, his wife or children, or any of them,” &c.?—That is only a provision to protect the pension in the event of the bankruptcy of the pensioner.

143. *Hon. Major Steward.*] It is not contingent on death; it is contingent on financial death?—Quite so; it is not to apply in the case of physical death.

144. *The Chairman.*] So that if an officer in full receipt of pension chose to incur such liabilities as would make him a bankrupt, then the trustees have the power of handing the pension over to his wife and family?—Yes. You see the point is that his creditors shall not get it. The idea of the pension is that it shall keep an officer during his old age. I hope you realise that it is a wise provision.

145. What other trustees are acting with you now?—Mr. Butt is the other trustee. The rules provide that the general manager shall be one trustee. The general manager is on his way out from Home, and until he arrives the board of trustees is one short.

146. Have you considered that this fund as at present constituted will be able to pay the pensions of officers as they fall in? Have you considered what actuarial basis it is on?—The pensions being paid now are those which the actuary advised us the fund could pay.