

societies." Is that correct?—What I meant by that difference of opinion was that the manager thought it was a fine thing for the working-man and I thought it was not. There was always that difference of opinion between the manager and the men.

227. *Hon. Major Steward.*] Were the others of the same opinion as yourself?—Yes; the majority of the men objected to it right through.

228. *Mr. Fisher.*] This difference at this time must have arisen in regard to this Bill before the House?—I am not a very good scholar.

229. This particular difference arose in regard to the Bill then before the House?—No, that is not correct.

230. *The Chairman.*] Then, the petition goes on, "(3.) That there is a private benefit society established with these sugar-works. It is compulsory for all employés to join this society after they have been in the employ of the company for two years. Though the company deny that they use any compulsion, still the compulsion is used, as in my own case I was informed when I declined to join that they intended to shorten hands soon, and the preference would be given to retain those who belonged to the society. So I had to join or lose my position, though I pointed out that I belonged to the Oddfellows and Foresters. I was told to give those societies up." To which society do you refer?—The provident fund.

231. *Hon. Major Steward.*] The provident society provides a certain amount of insurance money at death?—Yes.

231A. And so much pension at a certain age?—Yes.

232. Is it compulsory for all employés to join this society after two years' service, or does it only apply to salaried officers, and not to those on day-wages?—They did not tell us, who were on day-wages, that it was compulsory for us to join.

233. *Mr. Fisher.*] You refer only to the provident society, and not to the employés' benefit society?—I refer only to the provident society.

234. "It is compulsory for all employés to join this society." Is that true?—They do not come and tell us it is compulsory for us to join or they will discharge us, but it was what Mr. Holroyd told me. He told me about shortening hands, and those who belonged to their society would have the preference of work.

235. Then you say, "So I had to join or lose my position." Surely you understood what you were writing when you wrote this?—Perhaps if I had not joined this society they might have been shortening hands and I might have been put off.

236. "So I had to join or lose my position, though I pointed out that I belonged to the Oddfellows and the Foresters"?—They did not compel me to join it.

237. Why did you say so?—I said so only indirectly.

238. Referring, then, to the Oddfellows and Foresters, here is a separate and distinct statement: "I was told to give those societies up." Is that correct?—Yes; he told me to give one of those societies up. I belonged to both the Oddfellows and the Foresters.

239. How much do you wish to withdraw from this petition? Do you wish to withdraw this, or to allow it to stand: "Though the company deny that they use any compulsion, still compulsion is used, as in my own case I was informed when I declined to join that they intended to shorten hands soon, and the preference would be given to retain those who belonged to the society"?—You can withdraw that.

240. Will you say if we can withdraw this: "So I had to join or lose my position"?—Yes.

241. Is this correct: "I pointed out that I belonged to the Oddfellows and Foresters. I was told to give those societies up"?—Yes, that is correct. I had to give up the Oddfellows to join the society.

242. Shall we say, "I was told to give up one of those societies"?—Yes.

243. Then, at the end of clause 3 you say, "In the assurance fund of this society we have no voice in the control or management, and there are many reasons—too many to mention here, but which I am willing to prove—that make the control and management of this society unfair to the employés forced to join." Will you tell us something about the society, and what you consider the principal points that make it unfair to the employés?—Well, none of the workmen have any say in this insurance fund at all. The head engineer or the head sugar-boiler, who get big salaries, have a little to do with it, but I do not call them working-men.

244. That is to say, the control is entirely in the hands of the officers of the company?—Yes. Mr. Miller told us that in Sydney there are working-men who know about it, but we do not know about it, and we cannot find out. The working-men there may be the chief engineer and head sugar-boiler.

245. You say "There are many reasons, too many to mention here": you have given us one reason, can you give us another, why the control and management are unfair to the employés?—Well, if a man wants to leave the service to go and get a better billet he has either to forfeit half his money or do something to be discharged. There are several I know who wanted to leave, but who did not want to leave half their money, and they had to go and do something—stay off work—to be discharged. Under these rules, if a man who is insured for £100 dies, they can give his wife so much a week out of that £100—perhaps 2s. 6d. or 5s. per week.

246. Do you know of any one who has received any benefit from that insurance fund?—I know of one; a man called McPherson.

247. No more?—No.

248. Do you know of any other men who had to give up a friendly society on account of this society?—One; William Metcalf. He was discharged from the works.

249. Why? Because he would not give it up?—No, for another reason.

250. *The Chairman.*] Then the petition goes on, "(4.) This was the feeling of the employés at the works, but still they were compelled to sign letters and petitions against the Bill at present before your honourable House, and I amongst the rest." You again use the word "compel,"