

21. Where are the meetings held?—At various places. We have now a very large dining-room at which the meetings are held.

22. Is that on the works?—Yes.

23. When are the meetings held?—Sometimes during the meal-hour, and at other times after the day's work is over. Sometimes, in consequence of the boats to town running very infrequently, the manager allows us to knock off a little bit earlier to attend a meeting.

24. They are not lengthy meetings, then?—No; the longest is about an hour.

25. *Mr. Poole.*] Did the members of the union commission you to give evidence here at all?—No, not from the union.

26. From the Benefit Society?—Yes, and the Provident Fund. I represent the two funds here. We have a joint committee composed of members of the committees of the two funds, and lately I have been chairman of the joint committee, and have been asked in that way to come here.

27. *The Chairman.*] By the committees which are elected by the members?—Yes. Of the Provident Fund committee only two are elected by the members.

28. *Mr. Poole.*] Have you heard any expressions of dissatisfaction at all with the existing funds?—No; rather the other way about.

29. And the members, so far as you know, are particularly anxious to stand by the Provident Fund in preference to anything the proposed amendments in this Bill would give them?—Yes, that is so.

30. *Mr. Alison.*] You presided at a meeting recently held of the sugar-workers as a whole?—Yes.

31. To take into consideration clause 56 of the Bill, which we were considering at that meeting: was there a full expression of opinion on the subject?—Yes, I believe there was.

32. The feeling of the meeting was against any alteration of the existing scheme which you are working under?—Very decidedly against any alteration.

33. Was there one dissentient voice raised?—Not one.

34. It was a very large attendance?—Yes.

35. And was an enthusiastic meeting?—Yes, towards the end decidedly so.

36. If it is stated that the Sugar Workers' Union is opposed to the existing system of contracting out, would you consider the statement to be correct?—I would think it very strange.

37. Have you heard from any of the sugar-workers anything that would indicate that they were opposed to the existing scheme?—No, I have personally heard nothing of the sort.

38. When men are taken on for employment are they called upon to join either the Benefit Society or the Provident Fund, or is it at their own option?—I believe they frequently make application to join the Benefit Society after starting and before they have been scarcely any time there at all.

39. And if they do not join are they dismissed?—No.

40. Have you known any single case where a man has been dismissed for that reason?—No.

41. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] I think you said that at the last meeting of the sugar-workers there was perfect unanimity prevailing?—Yes.

42. And the motion was moved by the General Manager of the company, Mr. Miller?—By the Works Manager.

43. Do you think any of the men would openly declare their hostility to a motion proposed by the Works Manager, or would be likely to express an opinion against it?—It might have that effect, but I do not think any right-thinking man would agree to anything he did not want.

44. I suppose you know that when his bread and butter are at stake and he has a wife and family a man generally keeps quiet when he would like to speak—I suppose you have been in that position yourself?—I cannot think of it.

45. You have a committee of the Provident Fund and a committee of the Benefit Society?—Yes, separate committees.

46. And then you say there is a joint committee, which meets and decides matters?—The two committees meet when something turns up which affects both our societies.

47. How does this Act affect the Provident Fund?—By abolishing our pensions scheme and insurance.

48. Wherein does the Act say they are touched at all?—I believe it does not do so, but the probability is that the company will not subscribe to our Provident Fund and also insure our lives under the Act.

49. Why not, when it is a Superannuation Fund with a death payment for which you are paying, and they subsidise you to the extent of 50 per cent.? They are relieved of no insurance premium for that. The maximum death payment is one year's salary?—Yes.

50. You are aware that in the case of death by accident under the Workers' Compensation Act the relatives of the deceased get £400?—In the case of a man who gets killed under our scheme the widow receives £100. The amount would be larger under the Workers' Compensation Act, but there are many other advantages under our scheme.

51. But in an ordinary benefit society you can get all those benefits by doubling the subscriptions; the scale varies from 6d. to 1s. 6d. a week according to the man's age. Do you think the workers would be likely to come and tell you they objected to your Benefit Society? Do you ever discuss matters with them?—No.

52. Are you called upon to discuss any union matters with them?—No.

53. Then you are not likely to know the views of the union?—No, I am not likely to know.

54. When I tell you I have in my possession information that has been sent to me since your last meeting, when the resolution which has been referred to was carried, stating that the Sugar Workers' Union strongly support the clause in the Bill, I suppose you are not in a position to say whether that is their opinion or not?—That is so.