

55. Well, I have it?—I am surprised to hear it. I can assure you that there are a large number of men up there who want you to delete that clause in the Bill.

56. Those two committees met, and the members of the Provident Fund committee voted on a question affecting the Benefit Society although they are not members of it?—The question at our meeting affected both societies.

57. According to your statement just now, there are only 110 members in the Chelsea works who belong to the Provident Fund out of 320?—Yes.

58. Would you allow the representatives of the 320 people to vote on matters that affected the Provident Fund alone?—I cannot quite answer that question.

59. It seems to be a peculiar procedure that where there is a fund in which a man has no interest whatever he should be allowed to give an expression of opinion and exercise a vote in connection with it. Assuming the Act was altered and did away with the Benefit Society alone and allowed the Provident Fund to remain, leaving the company to be responsible for accidents according to law, do you think that, after the speeches made at the meeting of the company calling attention to the great advantages of superannuation and recognising the valuable services rendered by the employees to the company, the mere fact of the company being compelled to carry out what this law says would make them stop their contributions to this fund?—I could not say what they would do.

60. Do you think a large wealthy company like that, which has any amount of money as we know from the balance-sheets, would object to the payment of £3,000 a year, which is the maximum it has ever paid, and consider itself so affected by this legislation as to make it withdraw that £3,000 a year?—I could not say. *I do not think I could have understood this question as here given, as I previously expressed the opposite opinion. See page 4.*

61. You do not think it would?—I should think it would not.

62. If there is any sincerity in the words of the Chairman of Directors, which were given to us by Mr. Miller to-day, nothing that will be done by this Act will be a justification to the company for withdrawing that £3,000 from their old and valued servants?—I am afraid that is a matter which is outside my knowledge.

63. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell us whether the committee of the Provident Fund at Chelsea and the committee of the Benefit Society ever meet separately?—Yes, they may have business in which only one of the societies is concerned.

64. And members of the other committee do not then intervene?—No. It is only when something touches both that the joint committee meets.

65. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Have you ever met jointly on any question save when your society was attacked by Parliament?—I believe we have not.

66. *Mr. Alison.*] Were the officials of the Sugar Workers' Union at the meeting that was held?—I do not know them. Mr. Wallace, the secretary, was.

67. Not being in the employ of the company, if he were in favour of the Bill he would have been quite able to speak in favour of it?—I should think so.

68. He would have no fear of any consequences in creating any antipathy?—You would think not.

69. *Mr. Hardy.*] I received a letter signed "S. S. Kinnaird." Is that your signature?—Yes.

70. Was this letter read at the meeting?—Yes.

71. Was it carefully considered?—Yes.

72. Are the members of the Sugar Workers' Union also members of the Benefit Society and Provident Fund?—I could not tell you. I do not know the officers of the union.

73. Are the members of the Sugar Workers' Union members of the Benefit Society and Provident Fund?—I could not tell you.

74. Was there a covering letter with this letter of Mr. Philson's asking you to be sure and get it passed, or was there any pressure brought to bear on the workers asking them to approve of this letter?—No.

75. So far as you know they seem to be satisfied with this letter?—Yes.

76. And knew that it was in opposition to some of the clauses in the Bill before Parliament?—Yes.

77. And yet they willingly approved of it?—They willingly approved of it. Before this letter was sent it was proposed that some one should come down to Wellington.

78. *The Chairman.*] Your evidence is really to this effect: that so far as your knowledge goes the men do not wish their society to be interfered with?—That is so.

79. And you cannot understand how it is that the members belonging to the Sugar Workers' Union are asking that the present society shall be broken up?—No, I cannot understand that.

THURSDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1908.

PATRICK JOSEPH O'REGAN examined. (No. 9.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Solicitor, practising in Wellington.
2. I understand you are acquainted with the working of the Conciliation Board of Wellington?—Yes, I am Chairman of that Board.

3. And you have some knowledge of the Workers' Compensation Acts now existing?—Yes.

4. Have you seen the Bill which is now before the House?—Yes, I have read the Bill.

5. This Committee would be glad to have your opinion with regard to its provisions?—Yes.

6. Will you make a statement in reference to it?—Perhaps I had better make a short statement. I think on the whole this measure is a decided improvement on the existing law. In the first place, it makes for simplicity, which is very desirable. It embodies all the existing amend-