

QUEBEC.

1st March, 1888.

RICHARD BURKE, Ship laborer, Quebec, sworn.

By Mr. KERWIN:—

Q.—How long have you been working as a ship laborer in the Port of Quebec?
A.—Since eighteen hundred and fifty-three.

Q.—Will you please tell the Commission the rate of wages you received for your labor when first you commenced to work in this Port? A.—When I started here first in eighteen hundred and fifty-three I did not work on board ship. For a couple of months I worked in a ship yard at eighty cents a day. Then I worked for one dollar and fifty cents a day, on board ship for a time. I then went away that fall to Savannah and got the same wages there and shorter hours—two and a-half hours shorter. That was in eighteen hundred and fifty-three on board ship. I came back here to Quebec the next year—eighteen hundred and fifty-four. I found the wages were raised something higher then. They ranged from about four dollars to three dollars and fifty cents and two dollars per day according to the nature of the work. I went to Savannah again that same year, in the fall of eighteen hundred and fifty-four, and worked there that year aboard ship. I came back here in eighteen hundred and fifty-five, and found wages down to one dollar and eighty cents a day, and gentlemen we would work about eleven and a-half hours for it.

Q.—In those days when you got through with the work, did you have any difficulty in receiving the wages due to you? A.—I have had only one case that I remember, when I sued for my wages.

Q.—In the Courts? A.—No; I sent a lawyer's letter to the man I worked for requesting him to pay the money, and I got the money through my lawyers, it was two dollars a day.

Q.—Have you ever heard of a case where ships left the Port of Quebec without the men being paid? A.—I have heard tell of such a case.

Q.—None of it came within your own personal knowledge? A.—No.

Q.—In what year was the Quebec Ship Laborer's Benevolent Society chartered?
A.—In eighteen hundred and sixty-two.

Q.—How were you paid in those days? A.—We were paid by the hour. Sometimes we got money on account and we got our arrears after the ship had left port.

Q.—How long after she went out? A.—Sometimes two or three days.

Q.—In those days was there a surplus of labor in the market? A.—I expect there was. There was plenty of men to be got. Sometimes they were scarce, sometimes they were plenty. It was according to the shipping.

Q.—Will you please tell the Commission about the accidents that happened in those days, and the reasons for those accidents so happening? A.—Well, at the time we started the Society, or that the Society was started, there was an objection to it. I remember when I got back to Quebec, from the South, I tried to get up a Society, here, for the welfare and the benefit of the Ship Laborers of this Port; to bury them when they got killed or died, and to feed them when they got wounded or sick. At