a young man died who was the main support of his four sisters. The amount of £120 from the grand lodge was sent along, but claims have been made against it, and the Public Trustee does not care to take the money over, and has suggested that it should remain for the present in our banking account. It is there now, and we cannot give these girls a penny, pending an arrangement being come to. I mentioned this matter to Mr. Tanner, and he suggested that these sick-benefits and funeral allowances should be protected from legal attachment, with which suggestion I concur.

27. You suggest that up to £150 the amount should be exempt from legal attachment?—Yes, and that in the absence of a will the trustees should have power to pay the amount to those whom they consider have a right to it.

28. With the exceptions you have referred to you have no objection to the other clauses in the Bill?—The Bill is, generally speaking, a step in the right direction, with the exception of the clauses I have mentioned.

29. *Mr. Jennings.*] How long has this levy been in existence?—In a minor degree the lodges of the North Island around Wellington have had it in existence for twenty years. The levy over all the lodges within the jurisdiction of the North Island Grand Lodge of Druids has been in existence for fourteen years.

30. Has any objection been made to it by any of the new members?—Not one.

31. What would be the position of those who have paid it for fourteen years if the clause were kept in the Bill?—I think the effect would be most disastrous.

32. *Mr. Wood.*] You said the Registrar considers lodges unfinancial which you think are still accumulating funds?—Yes. Business experience, as I have explained, is totally at variance with the actuarial results—that is, they are acting in inverse ratio. We are among the missing links, yet my lodge meets its liabilities, and is adding to its funds about £200 or £250 a year.

33. *Mr. Flatman.*] Do I understand that, on account of the increased number of members, you levy 3d. instead of 6d.?—For simplification of book-keeping we levy 6d., because a levy of 6d. pays for two deaths, therefore the sixpenny levy is in reality only a threepenny one, as the sixpenny levy realises a sum of £200, which pays for two deaths.

34. *Mr. Tanner.*] Is it not within your knowledge that the older societies, when they find themselves drifting to leeward, generally make some arrangement by which the newer entrants pay more, while the old members safeguard themselves by a lesser rate?—Yes, figuratively speaking, they are virtually putting a 50 lb. knapsack on the newer entrants, while they escape with a load half the weight.

35. Have you any knowledge of a society that raises its rates on existing members as well as on future entrants?—I have no knowledge, but I may state that the necessity exists for increased contributions, because on one page of the parliamentary paper I am referring to there are two societies shown, containing some thirty lodges, and in which the contributions have never been raised. Their average age—of lodges, not members—is from twenty-five to twenty-seven years, and they seem to be receding worse than other societies who have gone in for a graduated scale of increased contributions.

36. Do you know how many lodges in the country have advanced their rates of contributions, either partially or entirely, when going to the bad?—I believe all the Druids and the American Order of Odd Fellows and a portion of the Foresters got a graduated scale when faced with the difficulties I have mentioned.

37. Are there any lodges which, while well aware of their position, still maintain a passive attitude, and allow themselves to go from bad to worse?—Yes, there are lodges paying inadequate contributions, and remaining passive. In one such case the members are making a levy towards the Sick Fund. There are two societies which make no attempt to grapple with the question.

38. When asking that the Government measure should be made restrospective, your colleague interjected "After putting it before the lodges"?—He proposes that this matter should go before the lodges.

39. Is that to get the consent of the lodges—are they to have an option?—I presume he meant that they should have an opportunity of discussing the matter. The remit from the Conference of 1906 did not represent the true position, the unfair method of voting being palpably a farce.

40. If they are to have an option, what is the advantage of the clause? With regard to the levy, this seems to be a system of insurance independent of the ordinary £20 funeral allowance?—That is so.

41. Would it meet your case if that system could be detached from the objects of the Bill?—If any method can be provided to separate them so that it will not operate detrimentally, that will meet our case.

42. I mean, that your contribution for sick-pay and ordinary death-rate should be extraneous?—The accounts are kept separate and distinct.

43. Have you two Funeral Funds?—We have got the ordinary Funeral Fund, which is incorporated with the Sick Fund, and there is a separate Death Account kept in the transactions of the society. The Registrar gets a copy of every transaction.

44. But the ordinary Funeral Fund is incorporated in the Sick Fund?—That is so. The governing board controls the Funeral Fund, and the lodge itself controls the Sick Fund.

45. Then there ought to be no insuperable difficulty in adjusting this matter?—No. This clause would inflict serious injury on 13,000 members and their dependants.

46. *The Chairman.*] I suppose this levy is set out in your rule-book clearly?—Clearly, sir.

47. So that every candidate on becoming initiated is made aware of the rule as to the levy?—Not only that, but we have cards printed in our lodges setting out in clear, bold type what the member has to pay per week. In addition a charge is made for benevolence, and 6d. as a special levy.