16. Your objection to the National Provident Fund is the charitable aspect of it?—Yes. You only want to see the great amount of charity we relieve from our society.

17. Is there any more element of charity in the National Provident Fund than there would be in the friendly societies if you got a grant such as is proposed here, or, say, of 5s.?—Yes, there would.

18. Why?—Because we have been bound together for a great number of years, and the Government have forced us into this position. If the Government had not brought in this and other schemes we would have gone on our own course, and we would have been all right.

19. You are quite sure that if the Government subsidized societies to the extent you propose there would not be an element of charity in it?—Yes, there would.

20. Yet you object to the small element of charity in the National Provident Fund?—Yes, when it is costing the country such a great amount of money.

21. How much is it costing?—I could not say, but it must be costing at least £1,000 a year. The Druids management is costing under £500 a year—that is, travelling-expenses included.

22. I want you to understand that I have every sympathy with the friendly societies. I want you to try to see that there is a section of the people which the friendly societies could not reach; and I want to get your objection to the State trying to reach them?—I have no objection to the State reaching that section that cannot be reached by the friendly societies.

23. Do you admit that a section which has joined the National Provident Fund which could not join any friendly society?—I should not say that. I admit that there must be cases where the National Provident Fund would reach them, but it could do that and cost less than it is now costing.

24. *Hon. Mr. Beehan.*] Are you acquainted with the Subvention Act of New South Wales?—Yes.

25. Has it benefited the societies in New South Wales?—Yes, considerably.

26. Are all the societies there in favour of it?—They will be in a very short time from what I can learn.

27. Have you any idea of what it costs New South Wales *per capita?*—I understand that last year the cost was £17,000.

28. Would you be surprised that it cost less than 2s. 6d. to give all those benefits?—I would not be surprised.

29. The membership there is 164,000. If in New South Wales they could give those benefits for 2s. 6d., how is it that you want 5s.?—I only want 5s. in connection with members over 60. I think the proposal of the Government in connection with clause 1 is an excellent one. It is clause 2 I was referring to.

30. This is the point. In New South Wales the position is,—

"The subsidy under the Subventions to Friendly Societies Act, 1908, is payable on the following basis:—

"(*a.*) One-half of the cost to the society in each year for sick-pay, according to its rules, in respect of the period of sickness after twelve months from the commencement of each case of continuous sickness for all male members less than 65 years of age and for all female members less than 60 years of age. This subvention is not to exceed 5s. for each week of sickness included in any claim.

"(*b.*) The whole cost of the society (up to 5s. for each week of sickness included in any claim) for sick-pay in respect of male members aged 65 years and over and of female members aged 60 years and over."

31. There is a provision there that the limit is to be 5s. per week. I suppose you would not object to that limit here?—No.

32. It is also provided,—

"(*c.*) An amount equal to the total contributions chargeable under the rules of the society for the benefits of medical attendance and medicine in respect of male members aged 65 years and over and of female members aged 60 years and over: Provided that the rules of the society shall not charge rates of contribution for such benefits different to those chargeable to members under the ages specified herein.

"(*d.*) An amount equal to the total amount chargeable under the rules of the society to assure the payment of the funeral donations according to its rules in respect of male members aged 65 years and over and of female members aged 60 years and over."

Why is it you are asking 5s. when in New South Wales 2s. 4d. enables them to give all the benefits I have just mentioned?—I am only asking for 5s. for members over 60, not for members under 60.

33. *Hon. Mr. Fisher.*] What proportion would that be—very small, I suppose?—Practically 5 per cent. of the members are over 60 years of age.

34. *Hon. Mr. Beehan.*] The returns show the numbers over 65 years of age in all the societies in New Zealand is 22·68 per cent. Would you be in favour of something on the lines of the Subvention Act of New South Wales being adopted here?—No; I think the scheme brought down by the Government here is on every bit as good a footing.

35. What scheme is that?—The special Bill

36. The special Bill would cost a lot of money. As to the National Provident Fund: you object to that. Do you think it harmed the friendly societies from its activity last year?—Yes.

37. In what way?—By the canvassing of the scheme; it is felt that in case of adversity the Government is behind it.

38. Do you think that has something to do with the percentage last year—0·20—the lowest we have reached?—I should think it has a little to do with it.