

statement of the sick-pay made, and signed declarations by the visiting members, that the member in question is still ill, and that the members certify to the same effect. We think a check of that sort will prevent it.

62. The same care would be exercised as now?—Yes, the same care would be exercised.

63. *Mr. Sidey.*] Have the matters upon which you have given evidence been discussed by your order?—By the executive only. General questions like these are only submitted when you can make concrete proposals to the order, and then they are approved or disapproved at the annual meeting. I am authorized by the executive to appear here and give evidence along the lines I have stated, and the proposals I made are proposals which were suggested.

64. You are voicing the opinion of the executive when you say there would be no interference with the spirit of independence of the order by the granting of State subsidies?—Yes.

65. *Mr. Dickson.*] In connection with consolidating the funds of the different lodges and making it only one fund, do you not think that would create a spirit in the lodges that they would not take the same interest in it?—It has not been found so in the case of those lodges which have already consolidated. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows have consolidated their funds all over New Zealand, and they stand in the position of being the most financial, and they claim that consolidation was the primary cause of it.

66. When a lodge has got a member away sick and it is not actually responsible, do you think the same care would be taken, or would not the members say this comes out of the general fund, he is a very decent fellow and we will overlook it?—No; that is more likely to be done now than under consolidation, because the papers bearing on each case must come before the central authority and be examined, and you would scarcely get a medical officer to sign a declaration that the man was still ailing if he was not.

67. Do you not think there would be a chance of their being longer on the sick-pay of the lodge?—No, I do not think so. In the first place it does not pay a man to be on the sick list.

68. Not generally, but there are many cases where it has been done?—I do not know of many. My experience is not that.

69. The fact of the matter is this: some doctors may order a member away to the country for a change, and as soon as he goes away to the country he does not give him any medicine?—No.

70. Well, after the member has been away for a week he has to get a certificate, and all he has got to do to get his sick-pay is to put into the lodge at the fortnightly meeting his certificate from a doctor in the country where he is?—Yes, or from the doctor who sent him away in a case where he is away for a given time.

71. When the doctor sends him away to the country for a week or two, of course he gets the doctor's certificate for the next lodge meeting?—Yes.

72. If he is not back by the following lodge meeting he has to go to a doctor in the country. Do you think there would be the same supervision over that member and that the lodge would take the same interest if the fund was consolidated?—The lodge has got the same interest in that man as they had before, because they are still paying into the consolidated fund, and they are partners in it.

73. *Mr. Harris.*] I gather from what you told us that in your lodge you have a very good system of supervising the payment of sick-pay to members you have on your sick list?—Yes.

74. You know that this proposed scheme applies to all societies, and many of the smaller ones will not exercise the same supervision as you do?—Yes.

75. Do you not think there is a possibility of the sick-pay being very largely added to? Do you not think many societies will think, Oh, it does not matter to us how long a man is on the fund—whatever we pay out we will be reimbursed by the State, so that supervision will not be exercised, whereas if they were paying half as proposed by the Government scheme you are interested to the extent of 50 per cent., and naturally would give it more supervision under those circumstances when directly interested than when the Government was paying the lot?—If a man is laying himself out to beat you he will do it.

76. A man will beat you if he can—many of them will?—That is why we have set up a scheme of supervision to prevent the beating. I quite agree with you that it seems more feasible that such a thing would occur if the Government paid the whole subsidy. When I brought this question up I was simply speaking of my own order and the officers in it, and I can say that we would take all manner of care that it was not imposed upon, because I recognize it would be a big question to the society, and we would be fools to do anything to weaken it.

77. You still recognize there would be a tendency not to exercise the same supervision?—There is that weakness in it.

78. *Mr. Sidey.*] To that extent you agree with the statement of the Department about which I asked you a question?—That it was wiser for the Department to pay only half instead of the whole?

79. Yes?—There is the possibility of such a thing creeping in.

80. The statement of the Department was: "If the State pay the whole of any benefit the society's control over that benefit will be weakened"?—Yes, but I do not think that any one who was animated by the spirit of the order would allow such a thing to continue. Of course, it is quite possible for one hundred and one things to happen, but you look upon a man of honour to carry it out and do it thoroughly.

81. *Mr. Hayes.*] I think you said that subvention was the direct outcome of the National Provident Act, or that you thought it was?—Yes.

82. You are aware that a subvention scheme was officially offered by the Government in 1906 to the friendly societies before the Act was passed?—Yes, but that was turned down by the societies, was it not?

83. Yes?—I remember that.