10. I mean under your suggestion: why should you suggest that the State should go to the friendly societies and suggest that you should take these men if they guarantee the expenses?—Then you would not be running in opposition to the friendly societies. For instance, in the Wanganui district our membership has dropped, and we are going downhill.

11. Surely you do not attribute that solely to the National Provident Fund?—That is one of the causes, and a very strong cause. I admit that the times are affecting the population of friendly societies. The amount of pleasures that now exist, such as picture-shows and other amusements, are taking up the time of the young people, and they are not as anxious to go in for this sort of thing; but I attribute a great deal of the cause to the National Provident Fund.

12. Do you not think that the lecturing which takes place on behalf of the National Provident Fund must be an advertisement for the friendly societies as well as the Provident Fund?—No, I do not think so.

13. *Hon. Mr. Barr.*] You are of opinion that the people will be lifting their money and dropping out of the National Provident Fund in two years?—Yes.

14. That is your honest conviction?—I really believe so, because the inducements are there.

15. Then if so your society will come back to what it was, inasmuch as if they drop out, as a natural consequence they will want to go into something else?—No, they have had one experience, and especially if they are healthy men and had no cause to come on to the society a man will say, "I do not want any of that sort of thing."

16. Have you any idea how many have joined the National Provident Fund in the district in which your body works?—No, I have not, but complaints are made when we hold our district meetings.

17. When you make a statement such as you made here, we want to know what it is founded upon, and so far you have no knowledge how many have joined the Provident Fund in your district?—No, we have no means of knowing.

18. Are you in favour of the British scheme of insurance—that is, that the Government should take up the work and should work it through your societies? You would still be in the same position, but the whole thing would be subsidized through the State?—No, I am not in favour of that. I am in favour of the societies being left entirely alone.

19. For what reason?—Because they are doing such extraordinary good work, and the results show we are doing good work. We started years ago without any bequests, and by good management we have accumulated over a million and a half of money. If the friendly societies were left alone, with good management the results must be good.

20. Can you tell us the percentage of those who join your society and then drop out of it?—No, I could not tell you that. I think the average age of the member who joins a friendly society would be about 25.

21. It has been suggested that a considerable number of men join the societies and then in a few years drop out; some go abroad, and some ignore the thing. You have no means of finding out that number?—No, I have not.

22. Do you think the Government should take some steps in regard to those who are not qualified to join your society?—Yes, certainly I do.

23. Does your society provide for women?—Yes, we do; but our district has no women members in the society. Our district operates from Foxton right up the Main Trunk line to Ohakune. We have never yet had any applications from women.

24. You are aware of the fact that there are no benefits from the sick-fund in the National Provident Fund for three months?—That is so.

25. Your society gives sick-benefit after how many days of sickness?—From the time of joining.

26. But after having been three days sick—is that the qualification?—We pay by the day. One day sick is sufficient

27. That is slightly different from three months?—Yes.

28. Then one would imagine that it was an advantage to join the friendly society instead of the National Provident Fund?—I admit we have greater benefits than the National Provident Fund, but others do not think so.

29. Your society also gives a medical benefit?—Yes.

30. And that is not given under the Provident Fund at all?—No.

31. That is another advantage in joining your society?—I quite admit our society is head and shoulders above the Provident Fund. At our last meeting I was speaking to a very prominent member, and he said that with all our advantages he considered that the National Provident Fund was a very much better fund to join for a young man than our society.

32. Yet you have advantages which are far above those of the National Provident Fund?—I think so.

33. *Hon. Mr. Beehan.*] I gather from your remarks that, seeing that the Government contribute to the National Provident Fund and the Civil Service Fund, that they should subsidize the friendly societies?—I oppose that strongly.

34. Are you acquainted with the New South Wales Subvention Act?—I have some knowledge of it. I am not an authority on it. I have considered it in connection with this matter when we are talking about the consolidation of the sick-funds.

35. You know nothing practically of the New South Wales scheme?—I know this, that since subvention has been introduced there the capital per member has been reduced. For instance, in 1910 the capital per head per member in New South Wales was £10 3s. 3d.; in 1911 it fell to £9 9s. 11d.; in 1912 it fell again to £9 2s. 8d.; whereas in New Zealand in 1910 we showed £19 13s. 1d. per head, and we rose to £20 1s. 8d.

36. Are you aware of the increase in membership in the New South Wales friendly societies?—Yes, but I do not think it is owing to subvention that that increase has come about.