6. *Hon. Mr. Earnshaw.*] Do you think it would be a sound policy if the Government were, say, beginning at the age of 45, instead of offering a bonus on the death benefit, if they were to offer that as a bonus for reducing the contributions of members in the societies?—The general provision of subvention does that.

7. But I mean, instead of offering subvention to a man's heirs after his death, that they offer subvention as a reduction on the payments into a society while he is living?—That would be beneficial.

8. In your evidence you stated that you found that members who had been twenty or thirty years in a society were dropping out, and that was largely because they could not pay up the contributions. Instead of offering a funeral benefit on a man's death do you not think it would be wiser for the Government to offer that by way of subvention to his contributions?—In the direct sense?

9. Yes?—I am hardly competent to express an opinion upon that. Subvention in a general sense does that, but this is more of a direct character.

10. I mean his general contributions—not when he is sick?—Any relief given at that age would be a great boon.

11. And would keep a great many members in the societies that now lapse?—Yes.

12. *Mr. Coates.*] I take it that you are in favour of the Department's proposals?—Yes.

13. The proposals as they are submitted, with an increase to 5s. in the sick-pay?—Yes, that is in the continuous sick-periods. The continuous sick-allowance we grant is 5s. a week, and it would be of material benefit to our order.

14. Are you in favour of going further in the direction of the New South Wales system?—In the sense of a reduction in the contributions at the age of 65, yes. I am bold enough to think that, taking the friendly societies at their face value, at the age of 65 the contributions should be taken up by the State. I believe that the State would be conferring a very great boon upon those who for a very long period had been making a determined effort to make some provision for themselves.

15. *Hon. Mr. Luke.*] Do I understand you to mean that those contributions at the age of 65 would be in addition to any pension a man may be in receipt of?—The member's contributions never cease under the existing rule, and in my opinion, if possible, it would confer a great boon on the societies if the State were to take over the contributions—that is, the funeral and sick funds.

16. Does that mean that the State would pay the contributions instead of the individual?—Yes, and that would be a very great relief to a large number of members.

17. Then, generally, you approve of the Government scheme?—Yes; and I see no reason why the friendly societies should not be linked up with the National Provident Fund to work it.

18. *Hon. Mr. Beehan.*] A point was made in regard to the National Provident Fund about members at any time being able to draw out their contributions. You have no objection to that?—No.

19. There is no surrender value to a member drawing out his funds from a friendly society?—None whatever.

20. Do you think there should be?—Not in the sense of insurance. I hardly see how any surrender value could be given. I think the idea should be to retain membership, because it is in old age where the aid of the society comes in.

21. You are aware that a member even though he is 65 years of age and is in good bodily health could get no remuneration or benefits from a society unless he can produce a doctor's certificate that he is unable to follow any employment?—That is so.

22. And is not that where the hardship comes in?—That is so. They are really physically unfit to work because they are not equal to the younger man who is doing the same class of work, and yet they are not in a position to procure a certificate from a medical man in order to get the benefits that they have made provision for in a society.

23. And if they are not able to pay the contributions, of course, the membership lapses?—Yes.

24. It is that sort of member you would like to subsidize particularly?—That is so.

25. You want that subvention to be 5s. in place of 2s. 6d. over the age of 60 in the case of females and 65 in the case of males?—No. 1 in the Government's proposals covers that: "2s. 6d. per week towards the cost of the allowances paid to any members by the society in respect of sickness of more than twelve months' duration."

26. That is, all ages?—Yes.

27. That is a very liberal provision?—Yes.

28. In regard to the £15 in respect of the funeral benefit, do you think it would be better for the Government to pay the contribution into the district or grand lodge, as the case may be, instead of paying the £15?—Yes, because it would give the old-age members the benefit immediately. It is deferred, I think, under the proposals of the Department, but if it were paid down it would be of immediate benefit to the living members.

29. You would rather that instead of £15 at death?—I imagine the proposal of the Department is designed to lift the societies that are not at present solvent into a solvent state. It is a prospective income to the societies that would improve their financial position. Judging from the remarks of the Actuary, I think that was in his mind when this proposal was framed—that there are such a large number of societies in the Dominion at the present time who have not reached a state of solvency, and by a prospective benefit at death of membership of this £15 it would immediately raise the financial position or standard of the society. That might bring an