

nothing to do with that at all, and properly so, and that it was only a question of whether the State would help to pay the sick-pay of members over 60 years of age in the case of women and 65 in the case of men?—I did not say that is the State's duty to do that. I did not define it in that way. I said the question of deficiency or surplus should not affect the individuals who are in the various societies.

RETURN OF LAPSES.

			Rate of Secessions per Cent. per Annum.				
Central Age.			Manchester Unity, England, 1866-1870.	South Australia, 1895-1904.	Victoria, 1881-1890.	New South Wales, 1900-1908.	New Zealand (Sample Lodges).
18	..	..	4.36	9.1	6.10	10.97	7.0
23	..	..	5.29	8.8	9.52	13.26	9.8
28	..	..	4.38	6.8	8.26	11.03	7.7
33	..	..	3.09	4.6	6.04	7.86	6.0
38	..	..	2.19	3.1	3.72	5.55	4.3
43	..	..	1.42	1.8	2.20	3.44	3.4
48	..	..	0.87	1.3	1.69	2.01	1.5
53	..	..	0.61	1.0	1.23	1.25	1.2
58	..	..	0.48	0.7	1.01	1.11	0.7
63	..	..	0.38	0.5	0.76	0.76	0.6
68	..	..	0.26	0.4	0.31	0.67	0.4

JOHN KERSHAW examined. (No. 2.)

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] What are you?—I am secretary of the New Zealand Branch of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and also parliamentary agent for the society.

2. Do you wish to make a general statement to the Committee?—I wish it clearly understood that I am here not as representing my society, but at your request as a friendly society man. I will explain my reason for that letter. I with a number of others met the Hon. Mr. Beehan in June last. They were representatives of different friendly societies, and it was there stated and it was well known that from time to time the representatives of friendly societies had interviewed the Ministers of the different Governments with regard to the question of subvention, and promises had been made that a subvention scheme would be introduced. I might say in passing that I was a member of the Conference which was held in 1906, when the late Hon. Mr. Seddon drafted a scheme of subvention and offered to the Chairman of that Conference a copy of the scheme conditionally on it not being made known to the meeting. The Conference somewhat resented that position, as they thought it was not right to consider a scheme of which they were not in possession of the details. Consequently the Conference did not take any action. I do not think Mr. Hayes was quite right in saying that they passed a vote opposing subvention. They rejected it because they were not prepared to sanction a scheme of subvention the details of which they were not in possession of. No one but the Chairman had the details, and he was not allowed to give the meeting the information. That is something after the same style that Lloyd George did. The Conference were not placed in possession of the scheme, and consequently they took no action with regard to it. I may say that the question of subvention in regard to friendly societies has never yet been officially before the societies in New Zealand, and in June last, as I previously intimated, a number of representatives met the Hon. Mr. Beehan with the intention of trying to obtain from the Government their proposals for such a scheme, knowing that they had already promised that a scheme would be brought in on the same lines as that in operation in New South Wales, but not in the same terms. The object of that meeting was to try and arrange for a deputation to wait upon the Minister with a view of becoming possessed, if possible, of the proposal. I desire to say that in October, twelve months ago, I wrote to the Minister as representing the several societies in New Zealand, and asked if he would kindly supply us with an outline of the proposals of the Government in regard to the question of subvention. Although I wrote in October I did not get a reply until some time in December. I pointed out in that letter that commencing with December and continuing probably right up to March the different societies would be holding their annual meetings, at which meetings there would be representatives from the whole of the lodges in the Dominion, and if those proposals had been supplied they could have been considered by those different meetings, and a pronouncement could have been made as to whether the societies were favourable or not to the question of a Government subvention to friendly societies. However, that information was not given. The reply was that we could not be put in possession of the proposed legislation, and consequently we are just in the same position now as we were at that time, except that in June last a deputation waited upon the Minister and made a similar request that they should be supplied with the proposals of the Government. The Hon. Mr. Fisher was kind enough to receive this deputation, and he placed before them in confidence a draft scheme of subvention. That scheme was read by myself to the members of the