

1881.

NEW ZEALAND.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

(FOURTH REPORT, BY THE REGISTRAR OF).

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly, pursuant to "The Friendly Societies Act, 1877,"
Section 9, Subsection (6)*

REPORT

In the last annual report by the Registrar it was stated that, on account of the difficulty experienced in having the tables accompanying the report printed during the sitting of Parliament, it might be desirable to make future reports for the periods respectively terminating on the 31st December in each year.

As the previous report referred to matters during the year ending on the 30th June, 1880, this report specially refers to transactions during a period of six months ending on the 31st of December, 1880.

I.—BUSINESS OF THE REGISTRY OFFICE.

1. DEPARTMENTAL WORK DURING THE SIX MONTHS ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1880.

There has not been any very exceptional feature in the departmental work during the above period; the general work in the office, although important in nature and considerable in amount, being similar in character from year to year.

The time of the officers of the department available for the work has been insufficient to meet all requirements, and it has been found necessary to call in additional assistance to complete the compilation of the quinquennial returns of sickness and mortality, a work of considerable importance, the results being expected and desired by societies for the purpose of verifying or otherwise their several rates of contributions, as it is believed by many that the rates of sickness and mortality will be found so much lighter in the colony than in England as to render it actuarially possible to adopt lower scales of contributions than are recommended for adoption by English actuaries.

Much delay has arisen in the completion of the compilation of the statistical tables of 1879 on account of the difficulty experienced in obtaining returns from some of the societies.

The custom frequently adopted of appointing as officers of societies persons ignorant of any system or principle of book-keeping, and who perform their duties in a most careless manner, has rendered it very difficult—in some cases impossible—to obtain accurate returns of accounts or correct information as to facts that should be on record and that serve as data for actuarial valuations and for the compilation of important statistical tables. The correspondence entailed upon the department in consequence of such negligence, and also in the effort to enforce compliance with the provisions of the Act, has been considerable. The Registrar has felt it his duty to institute three several prosecutions for neglect in not having furnished returns after repeated applications.

On the other hand, it affords the Registrar much pleasure in recognizing the excellent character of the returns furnished by the secretaries of some societies and branches: the returns prepared by the secretaries of the Otago District, I.O.O.F., M.U.; the Westland District of Foresters; Court Blenheim, A.O.F.; and the Howard Lodge, I.O.O.F., M.U., being perhaps especially worthy of commendation. If the secretaries generally would exercise similar care and intelligence in the preparation of their returns, the labour of the department would be materially lightened, and the statistical results would be of more value.

The statistical tables for 1878 have been printed and circulated since the last report was made; but, as no digest of their contents was prefixed to them, they have been appended to this report, which specially deals further on with their subject-matter.

2. SOCIETIES AND BRANCHES REGISTERED DURING THE SIX MONTHS.

Twelve new societies have been registered during the half-year. These comprise 6 lodges of the United Ancient Order of Druids, affiliated to the Grand Lodge of Australia; one district, designated the Auckland Provincial District (the only one established in New Zealand), comprising 2 lodges, of the English order known as the National Independent Order of Odd Fellows; 1 railway benefit society, the Otago Railway Employés Benefit Society; the Sickness and Accident Mutual Assurance Association of New Zealand, a "general" friendly society, *i.e.*, a society constituted somewhat on the model of a life insurance society, having a central office situated in a particular town, but which, unlike