

from the administration of the Friendly Societies Act. It supplies an additional ground for hope that the important work which friendly societies are doing in the colony will be more widely and usefully extended.

But on the other hand the necessity imposed upon them of making the returns required by the department has been felt by some societies and branches to be a grievance; not that, notwithstanding their complaints to that effect, any unnecessary information has been asked for, for, in confirmation of the action of the department, the secretary of one of the largest societies has stated that nothing has been asked for that should not be kept on record by societies in their own interests or that was unnecessary.

Many societies would like to have all the benefits of registration without having to submit to the consequent responsibilities. Some object to the mere labour of making any returns, probably often due to the incompetency of officers; others object to the publication of such returns as would exhibit the financial position in an unfavourable light. It is to be hoped that by degrees these objections will disappear, and that the officers of all societies will realize the true nature and importance of their duties. The ostrich, when hard pressed, does not escape by hiding its head in the sand, nor will concealment of its true position permanently ward off insolvency from any society, although by such a course the existing members may escape the evil consequences, but at the expense of future members who may be induced to join.

2. SOCIETIES AND BRANCHES REGISTERED DURING THE YEAR.

Nineteen new societies and 51 new branches were placed on the register during the year. Of the 19 bodies which were thus registered as separate societies, only 9 were in reality independent bodies, namely, the Grey Valley Accident Relief Fund, the Invercargill Total Abstinence Society, and 7 Working-men's Clubs. Of the remaining 10, 2 were "districts" or "grand divisions" of friendly societies constituted on the federal or affiliated type (namely, the Ashley District of the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows, and the Grand Division of New Zealand of the Sons and Daughters of Temperance); 7 were "lodges" of the United Ancient Order of Druids; and 1 was a "sanctuary" of the Ancient Order of Shepherds. Although these ten bodies are all of them in reality branches, it was impossible to legally register them as such, because they are none of them in subordination to a superior authority located within New Zealand.

Of the 51 bodies registered as new branches during the year, 13 were "lodges" of the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows; 1 was a "lodge" of the American Order of Odd Fellows; 10 were "courts" of the Ancient Order of Foresters; 7 were "tents" of the Independent Order of Rechabites; 4 were "(subordinate) divisions" of the Sons and Daughters of Temperance; 15 were "lodges" of the Independent Order of Good Templars; while one was a "temple" of the same order.

Apparently the progress of registration during 1881 has thus not been as rapid as during 1880; but, if the various lodges of the Independent Order of Good Templars, which is not a friendly society, be left out of account in both cases, the progress will be seen to have been more rapid.

A list of registered societies, with their registered branches, as on the 31st December, 1881, is given in Schedule I. to this report. The names of "societies having branches" within the meaning of section 30 of the Act—*i.e.*, districts of the affiliated orders, whether or not they have branches registered as such—are given in italics.

The progress of registration during the year will perhaps be best indicated by the following comparative table, showing how the various affiliated orders and the isolated societies were represented on the register at its beginning and end:—

Name of Society or Class of Society.	Statement as on 31st December, 1880.	Statement as on 31st December, 1881.
Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows	11 Districts and 62 Lodges	12 Districts and 75 Lodges.
Independent Order of Odd Fellows (American)	1 Grand Lodge and 15 Subordinate Lodges	1 Grand Lodge and 15 Subordinate Lodges.
National Independent Order of Odd Fellows	1 District and 2 Lodges	1 District and 2 Lodges.
Ancient Order of Foresters	6 Districts, 45 Courts, and 2 Widow and Orphan Funds	6 Districts, 56 Courts, and 2 Widow and Orphan Funds.
Ancient Order of Shepherds	1 Sanctuary	2 Sanctuaries.
United Ancient Order of Druids	8 Lodges	15 Lodges.
Loyal United Friends' Benefit Society	1 Lodge	1 Lodge.
Independent Order of Rechabites	1 District and 3 Tents	1 District and 10 Tents.
Sons and Daughters of Temperance	5 Subordinate Divisions	1 Grand Division and 8 Subordinate Divisions.
Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society	7 Branches	7 Branches.
New Zealand Railways Employés' Benefit Society	2 Branches	2 Branches.
Isolated Friendly Societies	Four	Five.
Benevolent Society	One	One.
Working-men's Clubs	Two	Nine.
Independent Order of Good Templars	1 Grand Lodge and 84 Subordinate Lodges	1 Grand Lodge, 99 Subordinate Lodges, and 1 Temple.
Isolated Specially-authorized Society	Nil	One.

3. AMENDMENTS OF RULES REGISTERED DURING THE YEAR.

Six bodies have registered complete sets of new rules during the year, in lieu of sets already registered. These comprise a district of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Odd Fellows, a district of the Independent Order of Rechabites, 3 courts of the Ancient Order of Foresters, and the Christchurch branch of the New Zealand Railways Employés' Benefit Society.

Eleven bodies have registered partial amendments of their rules during 1881. They comprise 2 districts and 2 lodges of the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows, 1 district and 3 courts of the Ancient