

1883.

NEW ZEALAND.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

(SIXTH REPORT, BY THE REGISTRAR OF).

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to "The Friendly Societies Act, 1882,"
Section 5, Subsection (8).*

REPORT.

IN order to present the annual report on friendly societies to Parliament at the commencement of the session it was necessary to limit the statistical tables which accompany it to compilations from such returns as relate to the year 1881. The time during which the returns for the year 1882 should have been sent in to this office did not expire until 1st April last: it has therefore been found impossible to compile anything like complete tables from them so as to have them printed together with this report. As the number of registered societies is being added to year by year there is a continuous increase in the statistical value of these tables. This, of course, has involved a corresponding increase in the work of this department.

During the session of 1882 an Act to consolidate and amend the existing Friendly Societies Acts was passed by Parliament. The Registrar therefore issued a circular letter to the secretaries of friendly societies giving a brief statement and explanation of the principal changes which are embodied in it. This circular is appended as Schedule I. to this report. The secretary of each society should have by him a copy of the Act, so that he may be thoroughly conversant with the duties of his office.

Several recommendations have been received from societies nominating gentlemen as public valuers whose names the Registrar has not been able to submit to the Governor for approval. It appears to be imagined by many that a knowledge of mercantile accounts is a sufficient qualification for the office, whereas the work involves considerable actuarial knowledge and experience. In Schedule II. will be found a paper of test questions which have been recently forwarded to applicants. In not a single instance has any attempt as yet been made to answer these questions.

The Government having determined to relieve registered friendly societies of the cost of valuation—which, especially in small lodges, was felt to be a heavy tax on savings—all claims for the cost of valuations made in accordance with the Act have been passed for payment.

PUBLIC AUDITORS.

The various societies having been asked to suggest the names of suitable persons to be appointed Public Auditors in terms of the Friendly Societies Act, and to state what they considered to be fair rates of remuneration to be paid by the respective societies for the services of Public Auditors, the names recommended were, in most instances, submitted to His Excellency the Administrator for approval, and the appointments made; but, as the Registrar is of opinion that this office ought not to be held concurrently with that of secretary to a friendly society, he was unable to submit to His Excellency the names of some who were thoroughly competent to perform the duties.

There are at present nominally ten Public Auditors, viz: two at Wellington, two at Dunedin, two at Hokitika, one at Woolston, one at Nelson, one at the Thames; one was appointed at Auckland, but he has lately expressed an unwillingness to act.

After due consideration of the various rates of remuneration recommended by the societies for adoption, the following scale was approved of by His Excellency as the maximum scale to be charged to friendly societies for the services of Public Auditors:—

	Fee not to exceed
For the audit of the accounts and funds of lodges not exceeding 50 members	£1 1 0
For the audit of the accounts and funds of lodges exceeding 50 members but not exceeding 100 members	2 2 0
And (not to exceed) an additional half-guinea for each additional 50 members or part thereof.	
For the audit of the accounts and funds of districts or central bodies having not more than three branches	1 1 0
And (not to exceed) an additional five shillings for each additional branch (above three).	