

CONVERSION OF REGISTERED SOCIETIES INTO BRANCHES.

During the year the following were brought under the legal control of their respective district bodies by conversion from the status of separately registered societies into that of registered branches :—

Manchester Unity Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

Loyal Howard Lodge (Nelson District).		Loyal Benevolent Lodge (North Canterbury District).
Kaiapoi Lodge (North Canterbury District).		

Ancient Order of Foresters.

Court Pride of the Forest (Nelson District).		Court Concord (Nelson District).
		Court Havelock (United Otago District).

Independent Order of Rechabites.

Star of Hauraki Tent, New Zealand District.

CANCELLATION OF REGISTRY.

The registrations of the following societies and branches have been cancelled during the year on the ground that they have ceased to exist :—

Independent Order of Odd Fellows (American).

Mount Ida Lodge.		Wanganui Lodge.
Ravensbourne Lodge.		Avon Lodge.

The Sickness and Accident Assurance Association of New Zealand.

The registrations of the following divisions of the Sons and Daughters of Temperance have been cancelled upon instruments of dissolution duly registered :—

Sons and Daughters of Temperance.

Star of Peace Division.		Phoenix Division.
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An application was again made to register an instrument of dissolution of the Naseby Lodge, M.U., I.O.O.F. This lodge was registered under the Act of 1867 as a separate society, that Act not having provided for the registration of branches as such. The rules, however, of the Naseby Lodge stated that it should be a lodge of the Otago District, M.U., I.O.O.F., and expressed subordination to the rules of the district. An application had been made in 1881 for the registration of an instrument of dissolution, the secretary of the lodge having informed the Registrar that the reason the decision in favour of a dissolution was arrived at by the members was because the law "debarred them from appropriating a portion of the interest accruing from benefit fund investments for management expenses." The Assistant Law Officer advised that, in interpreting the words "branch society" in the 26th section of "The Friendly Societies Act, 1877," it would only be necessary "to consider whether the Naseby Lodge is a branch within the meaning of the interpretation clause." That clause read as follows :—"Branch" means any number of the members of a society under the control of a central body having a separate fund administered by themselves or by a committee of officers appointed by themselves." As the Naseby Lodge by its rules came within that interpretation, and as the District Executive refused to give the consent to the dissolution required by the 26th said section, the application was refused. A fresh application was made in 1882, after the Friendly Societies Act of 1882 was passed. But the wording of this Act also rendered the consent of the district necessary. Consequently the later application for the registration of an instrument of dissolution was refused, the district having adhered to its decision.

PROSECUTIONS.

Instructions for prosecution were issued in respect of the following societies for neglect to furnish returns in accordance with the Act :—

Court Lord Clyde, A.O.F.		Enterprise Lodge, U.A.O.D.
Ethelbert Lodge, U.A.O.D.		Hope of Dunedin Tent, I.O.R.
Perseverance Division, Sons of Temperance.		Star of Hauraki Tent, I.O.R.
Fountain of Friendship Lodge, M.U.		Good Samaritan Tent, I.O.R.
Court Star of the Dunstan, A.O.F.		Resolution Division, Sons of Temperance.

In the cases of the first three of these fines were inflicted, but the other societies undertook to furnish the returns, and the prosecution was withdrawn.

STATISTICS FOR 1881.

In addition to two tables published together with last year's report, indicating respectively the numerical progress of societies during the year 1881 and the ages of members at its close, six tables have been compiled from the returns for that year, and are appended to this report. In Table VII. are given the membership and funds for the five years ending 31st December, 1881. In this table there are at present too many omissions to make it generally valuable for purposes of comparison, but as more and more of the friendly societies in the colony avail themselves of the advantages of registration a quinquennial table will prove of very great interest. In Table VI.—Supplemental Statistics—owing to the imperfect character of the information supplied as to unregistered societies those totals which in consequence are incomplete have been put within brackets. When all the branches of registered orders and districts shall be registered, in compliance with the requirements of "The Friendly Societies Act, 1882," the returns may be expected to be more complete,