

years ago were satisfied that the auditors chosen from among their own members, and maybe quite unfitted for the position, were good enough for this important work. It has cost some of these societies a considerable sum in losses to learn the lesson, and now that their funds have been depleted they are hastening to take such steps as will prevent a recurrence of these irregularities.

A most important and highly practicable scheme has come into prominence in England that promises to go a long way towards solving the audit difficulty. It is proposed to set up a standard test for members of societies who, on passing an examination in friendly society rules, practice, and finance, might be accepted as auditors, to be licensed only as such, and to be paid a fee for their work. There appears on the face of it to be a great deal to be said in favour of such a system, in preference to any attempt to force friendly societies' accounts to be audited by Public Auditors only.

The following new appointments of Public Auditors under section 5 of the 1908 Act were made during the year :—

Name.	Place.	Name.	Place.
A. Oakey .. ..	Wellington.	John Raeburn .. ..	Paeroa.
W. Gibb, jun. .. ..	Oamaru.	Herbert Bolton .. ..	Wellington.
C. J. Salter .. ..	Wellington.	E. C. Ludwig .. ..	"
E. J. Harvey .. ..	Blenheim.	T. E. Whitton .. ..	Auckland.
E. W. Hunt .. ..	Wellington.	A. L. Gray .. ..	Kaiapoi.
Henry Ivory .. ..	"	Mark Maxton .. ..	Greytown.

#### DISSOLUTIONS AND SECESSIONS.

A reference has already been made to the specific powers now given to central bodies whereby they may impose their own conditions when giving consent to the dissolution of a branch, and it behoves all societies to carefully examine their rules on this point in order that the powers of the society may not in any way be impaired by an old and ill-considered rule. As regards secession it cannot be too strongly impressed upon societies that rules setting out the terms on which a branch may take this step should be made as clear as possible for all parties, and at the same time impose that restraint that is so necessary to prevent the existence of a large fund from tempting members to disband and share the lodge benefit funds without due regard to the financial position of the remaining lodges in the district.

Some cases have come under the notice of this office that show to what extent ambiguous and loosely drawn rules on these points may lead to friction and needless expense.

#### SAVINGS-BANK ACCOUNTS.

In the new regulations gazetted under the Act of 1909 provision is made for the Registrar to notify the Postal authorities of changes in the trustees of friendly societies and branches.

In the form now issued by this office for the use of societies notifying a change of trustees, there is a space provided for the particulars of the Post-Office Savings-Bank account open in the name of the society or branch. Secretaries are required to fill in the particulars in all such cases, and where there is no such account open the secretary should put his pen through the part relating thereto in the form.

By this system societies will be relieved of the necessity of also advising the Postal Department of the alteration, and obviate the delay of waiting until the change is confirmed by reference to this office in Wellington, as the Registrar will, on receiving the particulars from the society, notify the Postal Department forthwith.

#### GENERAL STATISTICS.

##### MEMBERSHIP AND FUNDS.

The following table shows the increased membership in 567 lodges\* which furnished returns for 1909 :—

	1909.	
Number of members, 1st January .. ..	..	62,998
Number admitted by—		
Initiation, &c. .. ..	6,772	
Clearance .. ..	546	
		70,316
Number who died .. ..	403	
Number left by—		
Clearance .. ..	605	
Arrears, &c. .. ..	4,880	
		5,888
Number of members at 31st December .. ..	..	64,428

\* The word "lodge," when applied to all societies, is to be understood as embracing the synonymous terms "court," "tent," &c., as used in the various orders.

The increase in membership during 1909 was 2.27 per cent. only, a very sharp fall in the rate as compared with the previous year, when it was 6.4 per cent.