

trustee is absent from New Zealand, becomes bankrupt, compounds with his creditors, becomes a lunatic, dies, or has been removed from his office of trustee, or if it is unknown whether he is alive or dead, a registered society, instead of having to apply to the Supreme Court, or to take any other proceedings which it would have to take if unregistered, can have such funds, debentures, &c., transferred by direction of the Registrar, on payment of a fee of £1.

7. The documents of the society are, for the most part, free from stamp duty; and no customs duty is chargeable on the regalia, &c., of a registered society.

8. The society can admit members under twenty-one (but above sixteen), and take binding receipts from them, which would otherwise be of no effect.

9. To a registered friendly society a certificate of the birth or death of a member, or of any other person insured or to be insured with it, costs only 1s.

10. If a registered society invests money on mortgage, such mortgages can be discharged by a mere indorsed receipt without reconveyance.

11. A registered society has the advantage of depositing money to any amount at interest in the Post Office Savings Bank in the names of the trustees as such—a privilege denied to unregistered societies, as deposits by their trustees can only be received as the deposits of the individuals, and are subject to the ordinary limitation as to amounts at interest, the society not being recognized by the authorities.

12. Its officers are legally bound to render account, and give up all money or property in their possession on demand or notice, and may be compelled by order of a Resident Magistrate's Court to do so.

13. Disputes may be legally settled according to the societies' own rules, or, if no decision is made within forty days after a decision is applied for, by a Resident Magistrate's Court; or, if both parties desire it, and the rules do not forbid, by the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

14. Members of registered friendly societies have the privilege of legally insuring money on the deaths of their wives and children, for their funeral expenses, without having an insurable interest in their lives (such insurances are void by Act of the Imperial Parliament, if effected with an unregistered society).

15. Members of registered societies may (unless in benevolent societies, or working men's clubs) dispose at death of sums payable by the society not exceeding £50, by written nomination, without a will; and this nomination may be made by youths of sixteen, who cannot make a will until they are twenty-one.

16. Where there is no will and no nomination the trustees may distribute sums under £50 without letters of administration being taken out (a person who should do so in any other case would make himself liable for the debts of the deceased).

17. The society is entitled, without being in anywise compelled to do so, to call in the services of Public Auditors for the auditing of its accounts, and of Public Valuers for the valuation of its assets and liabilities, at fixed rates of fees.

18. The rules and other important documents relating to it are placed on record in a public office, from whence authentic copies can be obtained, which are evidence in a court of justice.

REGULATIONS AND MODEL RULES.

A series of regulations and forms for procedure under the Act have, in terms of the 39th section of the Act, been made and approved by the Governor. These regulations have been attached to copies of the Act, and forwarded to all known societies in the colony. As it is convenient that they should accompany this report they have been appended hereto as Schedule IV., notwithstanding that in terms of the Act a copy has already been laid on the table of each House of the General Assembly.

Model rules have also been prepared for the guidance of societies, so that, in drafting rules previous to registration thereof, they may adapt their rules to the requirements of the Act, and by the adoption of a clear and uniform system relieve the office and the Revising Barrister from much work connected with the examination of the rules. These rules have not as yet been circulated.

The Registrar in his capacity as Registrar-General has, in terms of section 14, subsection 10, issued instructions to Registrars of Births and Deaths as to their duties under "The Friendly Societies Act, 1877." A copy of these instructions, in which are included the forms required for carrying them out, is appended to this report as Schedule V.

THE ACTUARY.

The Registrar has imposed upon him by the Act certain duties of an actuarial nature, such as the following:—

The preparation of model forms of account, balance-sheets,* and valuations; the collection and distribution of information on the subject of the statistics of life and sickness, with the application thereof to the business of friendly societies; the construction of tables for the payment of sums of money on death, in sickness, or old age, and on any other contingency forming the subject of an assurance authorized under the Act which may appear to be calculable; the examination of the quinquennial returns, and the preparation of an abstract of them; to make investigation upon an application for dissolution, and suspend at discretion such dissolution, if he deems that certain alterations and adjustment of contributions and benefits may prevent the necessity of an award of dissolution being made.

These and other duties rendered it necessary that a gentleman competent to perform the duties of the office should be appointed as Actuary under the Act, either as attached to the permanent staff of the department, or as being available when his services might be required by the Registrar. The existence of a vacancy in the Registrar-General's department enabled the Government, without

* In the case of a society transacting *insurance* business, the preparation of forms of account and of balance-sheets, in fact of all forms, requires the assistance of an actuary.