

during the year 1879, 1,396 left, and 82 died, the net increase in membership during the year being thus 94, or '80 per cent. on the number at the commencement of the year. In 1878 the net increase was 3'49 per cent. on the number at the commencement of that year (*vide* Table I.) and in 1877 it was 2'32 (*vide* Table I. appended to Registrar's Second Report). The great diminution in the net increase per cent. is doubtless due to the period of commercial depression which the colony has been passing through. Of the 1,396 members who left during 1879, 192 were transferred to other lodges by the process known as "clearance," leaving 1,204 members who actually seceded. The secession rate was thus 10'2 per cent. on the mean number of members during the year. In 1878 the secession rate was 8'4 per cent., and in 1877 it was 8'9 per cent.

In regard to the sickness experience of lodges, Table IX. differs from Table VIII. by distinguishing between acute attacks and chronic invalidity. After a continuous sickness of six months it is usual to reduce the weekly allowance to a sick member, and after a sickness of twelve months a further reduction is made. It therefore becomes important to classify the sickness experienced under these three heads: (1.) Sickness within six months of the commencement of the attack; (2.) Sickness more than six but less than twelve months from the commencement of the attack; and (3.) Sickness more than twelve months from the commencement of the attack. From Table IX. it will be seen that out of 10,582 weeks 5 days sickness experienced, 7,425 weeks 2 days came under the first, 934 weeks 2 days under the second, and 2,233 weeks 1 day under the third of these categories. In other words, 70'2 per cent. of the sickness belonged to the first period, 8'8 per cent. to the second period, and 21 per cent. to the third period. Almost every lodge experienced a certain amount of sickness belonging to the first period (*i.e.*, of *acute* sickness), but only a minority (47 out of 122) had members whose continuous sickness had extended over six months. Most of these, as might have been expected, were lodges of considerable age. In the 9 lodges established prior to 1850 the percentages were as follow: 59'8 per cent. in the first period, 10'8 per cent. in the second, and 29'4 per cent. in the third.

Table X. refers to the Sick and Funeral Funds of the various lodges. From this it will be seen that the periodical contributions to provide sick and funeral benefits amounted in the aggregate to £15,857 12s. 4½d., or £1 6s. 11d. per member. During 1878 the contributions averaged £1 7s. per member (see Tables II. and I.), and during 1877 they averaged £1 7s. 2d. It will thus be seen that the improvement in the rates of contribution of some districts, being entirely confined to new members, had not time, up to the 31st December, 1879, to effect any increase in the general average.

Entrance fees to the amount of £1,323 1s. 5d. (including clearance fees, &c.), or 16s. 10d. per member admitted, were credited to the Sick and Funeral Funds. In 1878 the average was 19s. 6d. per member admitted, and in 1877 it was £1 0s. 10d. per member admitted.

£8,748 0s. 8½d. was paid in sick allowances during 1879, and £1,783 10s. in funeral benefits (£1,375 on the deaths of members, and £408 10s. on the deaths of members' wives). The average amount of pay per sick member was about £5 16s. 8d., and the average weekly rate of pay was 16s. 6½d. The average payment on the death of a member was £16 15s. 4½d., and on the death of a members' wife, £11 0s. 9½d. In 1878 the average weekly rate of sick pay was 16s. 9d. The average payment on the death of a member was £17 2s., and on the death of a member's wife £9 5s. 11d.

The levies to the District Funeral Fund amounted to 4s. 1½d. per member in 1879, as against 3s. 6½d. in 1878, and 3s. 7d. in 1877.

The column of this table headed "Other Payments" is one which ought to have been nearly blank. The fund being established solely for the purpose of providing sick and funeral benefits, it follows that, with the exception of transfers made on the authority of a valuation report, and, perhaps, of cross-entries, no extraneous expenditure should appear in the accounts. Until the passing of the Amendment Act of 1878, it was considered doubtful whether these payments were absolutely illegal. As, however, the 7th section of that Act removes any doubt which may have previously existed, the Registrar, on observing the illegitimate items in the returns for 1879, issued circulars to the offending lodges, pointing out the illegality of the transactions, and giving warning that a repetition thereof would entail prosecution. The returns for 1880 unfortunately show that the illegal practice has been in too many cases repeated. The Registrar has therefore offered to the offenders the alternatives of prosecution and of restitution (either from the Management Fund or from other sources) to the Benefit Fund of the amounts misappropriated. In several cases the latter course has been adopted, and satisfactory evidence of the fact forwarded to the Registrar. In the remaining cases the Registrar only awaits the completion of urgent departmental work before instituting prosecutions.

The total receipts of the Sick and Funeral Funds for 1879 were £27,317 4s. 5½d., or on an average £223 18s. 3d. per lodge, court, &c., and £2 6s. 4½d. per member. The total payments were £16,378 2s. 1½d., or on an average £134 4s. 11d. per lodge and £1 7s. 9½d. per member. The payments were thus 60'0 per cent. of the receipts. If cross-entries, such as receipts and payments on account of visiting members, &c., could have been completely eliminated, it is obvious that the comparison of true income with true outgo would have been even more favourable. The difficulties attending such a process were, however, found to be insurmountable. In 1878 the receipts were £2 7s. 6½d. per member. The payments were £1 5s. 10½d. per member, or 54'5 per cent. of the receipts. In 1877 the receipts were £2 11s. 0½d. per member; and the payments £1 7s. 2d. per member, or 53'2 per cent. of the receipts. The percentage of expenses on receipts has thus been steadily increasing during the three years. As a further illustration of the same tendency, it may be mentioned that in the 9 oldest lodges the receipts of the Benefit Fund were, in 1879, £4,428 13s. 5d., and the payments £2,943 16s. 6d., or 66'5 per cent. of the receipts.

Excluding Court Patea, A.O.F., which had temporarily suffered from a large secession of members, but which was soon restored to its usual numerical strength, the amount of the Benefit Fund per member on 31st December, 1879, ranged from £28 18s. 11d., in the Loyal Fountain of Friendship Lodge, I.O.O.F., M.U., Auckland, down to *nil* in the Unity Lodge, I.O.O.F., South Dunedin. The average amount for all the societies was £10 13s. 9d. On 31st December, 1878, it was £10 5s. 6d.; and on 31st December, 1877, £10 7s. 8d.

On the 31st December, 1879, there were 3 registered lodges, courts, &c., the Benefit Fund of each