VALUATIONS.

During the year 1884 ten complete valuations were returned to the Registrar. A summary table, showing the results of these valuations, is appended to this report (Schedule VIII.).

It will be noticed that each complete valuation shows a deficiency, and the causes assigned by the valuers, as productive of this unfortunate state of affairs, are the same as they have stated previously from time to time in their reports: the principal being insufficiency of contributions, and negligence in regard to the investment of funds.

Whatever advantages are possessed by friendly societies in this colony, in respect of the health and longevity of members, as well in respect of the high rates of interest obtainable, it would appear that far too high an estimate of these advantages was taken when societies were first established in New Zealand; and, although many societies have since raised their scale of contribution, a long time must elapse before a sound position can be regained, even under favourable circumstances and with the most careful management; but when the valuation reports from year to year still continue in many instances to show negligence in regard to investment of funds, as well as inadequate contributions for the benefits promised, the deficiency which results is not only not to be wondered at, but must be looked for as the natural consequence of the position.

STATISTICS FOR THE FIVE YEARS 1878-82.

Method of Quinquennial Compilation.—The sickness experience and other particulars for each year of the quinquennium relating to each member having been transferred from the annual returns to his card of membership, the cards for each lodge were sorted in order of members' year of birth, and the particulars were tabulated in schedules, being grouped in quinquennial age-periods, as shown in the tables given below. The results for each lodge thus obtained were compared with the annual returns, and where there existed any discrepancy, owing to incorrect or insufficient information as to the numbers of membership in any year, which would appreciably affect the subsequent calculations, the schedules were excluded from the second tabulation. In consequence of this a considerable amount of experience had to be sacrificed, but, as accuracy is of primary importance, the loss, though much to be regretted, was unavoidable. A second tabulation was then made from those schedules which had been found correct, in which the particulars of each age-period were grouped under four heads, namely: (1) Lodges in large towns (population 10,000 and upwards); (2) lodges in small towns (population from 2,000 to 10,000); (3) lodges in country districts; and (4) lodges in mining districts. Summary totals of these groups in each period were made, and the totals from these summaries gave the final results of all the reliable information which had been received for each year of the quinquennium. By the addition of these totals for the separate years the totals for the quinquennium were obtained. From these totals, again, the averages, &c., given in the accompanying tables were deduced. In Schedule V. are given the statistics relating to membership and to the sickness and mortality experience of those lodges which were included in the tabulation for each year of the period under review. It is to be observed that the variation in total membership in the respective years is the result of several independent factors. (1.) There is, of course, in every year fluctuation in nearly every lodge. The general effect of this throughout the quinquennium was an increase in membership, although in the year 1880, a time of considerable depression in the colony, a decrease took place. (2.) It has already been explained that in each year the experience of many lodges was rejected from the tabulation on account of inaccuracies. (3.) Some lodges were established, and some previously established were registered during the quinquennium. (4.) A few lodges lapsed during the quinquennium. All these causes, in varying combination, affected the totals of each year. The number of years of life under observation during the quinquennium—*i.e.*, the totals of the averages of the separate years—has been calculated on the assumption that each member admitted, withdrawing, or dying during the five years was under observation for six months, on an average, of the calendar year during which he was admitted, withdrew, or died. In all the accompanying tables the ages of members are their ages as at the *commencement* of the calendar year. The summary for the quinquennium 1878–82 of admissions, withdrawals, deaths, sickness, and years of life under observation, classified according to age-periods, is as follows:—

Ages of Members.	No. of Years of Life under Observation.	Admissions.	Withdrawals.	Deaths.		Sickness experienced.	
				Of Members.	Of Wives.	Weeks	days.
Under 20 ...	686·0	639	48	3	...	273	1
20 to 25 ...	4,463·5	1,342	672	19	3	2,143	4
25 to 30 ...	6,041·0	1,136	771	21	17	3,441	4
30 to 35 ...	5,515·0	653	628	21	16	3,746	1
35 to 40 ...	5,932·0	389	483	42	30	5,929	4
40 to 45 ...	4,957·0	89	290	51	20	5,665	0
45 to 50 ...	2,695·5	20	101	30	12	4,094	5
50 to 55 ...	1,126·5	2	16	17	6	1,940	2
55 to 60 ...	300·5	...	5	6	2	1,303	3
60 to 65 ...	86·5	...	...	3	...	432	1
65 to 70 ...	39·5	...	1	...	...	256	1
70 and upwards...	26·5	...	...	3	...	545	5
Ages unspecified...	343·5	15	46	2	1	705	3
All ages ...	32,213·0	4,285	3,061	218	107	30,477	4