

The number of returns issued and received, and the months in which they reached the Registry Office, is shown in the following table :—

Society.	Returns.*		The Months in 1902 when the Returns for 1901 reached office.											
	Issued.	Received.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April.	May.	June.	July.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec. and after.
M.U.I.O.O.F. ..	181	180	..	10	38	118	8	5	..	..	..	1	..	..
I.O.O.F. ..	40	32	2	8	4	9	3	..	..	4	1	1	..	..
N.I.O.O.F. ..	3	3	..	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
B.U.O.O.F. ..	2	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
A.O.F. ..	129	122	5	12	30	63	6	2	..	1	..	1	..	2
A.O.S. ..	1	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
U.A.O.D. ..	67	64	..	3	11	33	1	5	4	2	4	..	..	1
I.O.R. ..	43	38	2	1	3	23	4	..	3	1	..	1	..	..
S.D.T. ..	11	11	..	..	1	9	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
H.A.C.B.S. ..	26	14	..	..	..	1	1	9	..	1	1	..	..	1
P.A.F.S.A. ..	12	12	..	..	10	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
R.E.B.S. ..	2	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total Friendly Societies	517	480	10	37	100	258	24	21	7	9	6	4	..	4
I.F.S. ..	14	10	..	1	2	1	1	1	..	1	2	1	..	..
W.M.C. ..	14	12	1	..	3	5	1	..	1	..	..	..	1	..
S.A.S. ..	24	8	..	3	1	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Total ..	569	510	11	41	106	266	27	22	8	10	8	5	1	5

* Includes central bodies.

It will be seen by the foregoing that, while close on three quarters of the required returns were furnished during the first four months of the year, only 158 reached this office before the 1st April. Seeing that the figures embodied in the returns relate to the year terminated in December, it does not seem too much to expect that the whole of the returns should be sent in some time during the first quarter of the year.

A large amount of delay also arises in the compilation of the statistical tables, on account of the difficulty experienced in obtaining satisfactory corrections in the returns from a number of the branches of societies. It may also be pointed out that so long as one branch of a society withholds the particulars of its proceedings it is impossible to finally deal with the figures of such society, and that the dilatoriness of a few secretaries causes much loss of time in a variety of ways.

With a view of remedying this tardiness it is intended to move the Treasury to authorise legal proceedings against defaulting secretaries to enforce compliance with the statute.

The number of lodges* whose returns are tabulated is 445, and of central bodies 35, distributed according to Orders thus :—

Society.	Central Bodies.	Lodges.	Society.	Central Bodies.	Lodges.
M.U.I.O.O.F. ..	16	164	U.A.O.D. ..	3	61
I.O.O.F. ..	1	31	I.O.R. ..	2	36
N.I.O.O.F. ..	1	2	S.D.T. ..	1	10
B.U.O.O.F. ..	1	1	H.A.C.B.S. ..	1	13
A.O.F. ..	8	114	P.A.F.S.A. ..	1	11
A.O.S. ..	..	1	R.E.B.S. ..	..	1

In Table I. details are given of the name, place, and year of establishment of each lodge, with the membership and funds of the same at the end of 1901. The funds under the control of the central bodies are also included in the district totals. In the final column is entered the average surplus or deficiency per member in each lodge, as shown at the last valuation.

Tables II. to VI. contain a summary of the details relating to the membership, mortality and sickness, receipts and expenditure, funds, and investments of each separately registered society, with totals for the several Orders. In Tables III. to VI. shillings and pence have been omitted, there being no apparent advantage in publishing the values more accurately than as shown by the nearest pound.

MEMBERSHIP AND TOTAL FUNDS.

The number of members in these 445 lodges at the beginning of 1901 was 39,637; the members admitted by initiation and reinstatement were 4,420; those admitted by clearance were 280: total admitted, 4,700. The number who left by arrears, resignation, and expulsion was 2,587; by clearance, 238; and by death, 276: total left, 3,101. The net increase for the year was 1,599, or slightly over 4 per cent., and the number of members at the end of 1901 was therefore 41,236. The deaths of members' wives during the year were 151.

The total funds of the societies and branches as on the 31st December, 1901, amounted to £804,753, made up as follows: Sick and Funeral Funds (inclusive of amounts transferred to special funds out of surplus), £744,088; Medical and Management Funds, goods, &c., £60,665. Dividing the total funds by the number of members at the end of the year, it is found the average capital per member is now £19 10s. 4d.

* 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.