Taking the several years 1900–1906, the number of lodges whose returns were tabulated, the number of members, total funds, and average capital per member at the end of each were as under:—

Year.	Number of Lodges tabulated.	Number of Members.	Total Funds	Average Capital.
			£	£ s. d.
1900	443	40,257	766,480	19 0 9
1901	445	41,236	804,753	19 10 4
1902	462	43,408	846,315	19 9 11
1903	465	45,255	883,751	19 10 7
1904	479	47,302	936,388	19 15 11
1905	501	51,103	996,224	19 9 11
1906	500	53,759	1,057,821	19 13 6

The following table shows the number of members of friendly societies, the amount of their accumulated capital, and the average capital per member, in each of the Australian States and in the Colony of New Zealand, according to the latest received statistics, arranged in order of membership:—

State or Colony.	Date of Return.	Number of Lodges.	Number of Members.	Amount of Funds.	Capital per Member.
				£	£ s. d.
Victoria	31st December, 1905	1,306	111,557	1,626,555	14 11 7
New South Wales	" 1905	1,195	103,041	970,893	9 8 6
New Zealand	" 1905	501	51,103	996,224	19 9 11
South Australia	" 1904	499	49,233	676,044	13 14 8
Queensland	" 1905	399	32,164	359,371	11 3 6
Tasmania..	" 1904	155	16,500	142,000	8 12 2
Western Australia	" 1905	217	13,925	97,375	6 19 11

The following statement shows the total funds (including those of the central bodies) as on the 31st December, 1905 and 1906 respectively:—

Funds.	1905.	1906.	Assets.	1905.	1906.
	£	£		£	£
Sick and Funeral Funds ..	886,531	946,281	Investments at interest ..	799,822	851,852
Surplus Appropriation Funds ..	23,310	24,267	Value of land and buildings ..	136,154	142,636
Management Fund, goods, &c. ..	40,766	61,655	Cash not bearing interest ..	38,805	42,285
Widow and Orphans' Funds ..	9,471	9,349	Value of goods	11,592	11,830
Distress, Benevolent Funds, &c. ..	36,146	16,269	Other assets	8,482	8,265
			Owing by Management Fund ..	1,369	953
Totals	996,224	1,057,821	Totals	996,224	1,057,821

Progress of Friendly Societies' Business.

Tables have been prepared illustrating the increase in membership and contributions compared with life-insurance business and the population. The dissimilarity of the items does not facilitate a ready comparison, and the numbers have therefore been reduced to the common basis of 100 at 1887. This shows that for every 100 persons in the population at 1887 there were 118·36 at 1896 and 146·26 at 1905; whilst for every 100 friendly societies' members at 1887 there were 127·67 at 1896 and 205 at 1905. Friendly societies' membership had therefore increased at a considerably greater ratio as compared with its 1887 figures than the population has done, and the same result is disclosed in the case of friendly societies' contributions. It is interesting to note that the amount insured in life companies, the friendly societies' membership, and the friendly societies' contributions have all increased at almost exactly the same ratio. The greater rate of increase in life-insurance premiums as compared with friendly societies' contributions is probably due to the employment of paid canvassers.

Table A.

Year.	Population at 31st December.	Reduced to the Basis of 100 at 1887.	Amount of Life Insurance Premiums paid in Year.	Reduced to the Basis of 100 at 1887.	Aggregate Amount insured in Life Insurance Offices.	Reduced to the Basis of 100 at 1887.
			£		£	
1887	603,361	**100·00**	420,477	**100·00**	14,257,353	**100·00**
1890	625,508	**103·67**	464,462	**110·46**	15,582,650	**109·30**
1893	672,265	**111·42**	528,405	**125·67**	17,833,460	**125·08**
1896	714,162	**118·36**	586,527	**139·49**	19,535,397	**137·02**
1899	756,505	**125·38**	683,591	**162·57**	22,242,031	**156·01**
1902	807,929	**133·90**	798,145	**189·81**	25,330,185	**177·67**
1905	882,462	**146·26**	936,940	**222·82**	28,965,220	**203·16**