accustomed, while, if he is entering insurance for the first time, he can still exercise a free choice between a number of different systems, and receive his benefits through the one which accords most exactly with his individual needs and tastes.

"The payment of contributions by means of stamps on cards is in itself novel, but the old member of a society takes or sends his card to the same official to whom he formerly paid his club subscription. He receives benefit through his old society. He calls for it as before on the meeting-day of his local lodge, or receives it from the agent of his society whom he already knows, or, if his society is centralized, he receives it as before by postal remittance.

"Practically every variety of organization previously engaged in insurance in any form is now represented in the administration of the Act, from the slate club covering a single village to the industrial assurance company with representatives through the United Kingdom. Societies which previously gave sickness benefit, and trade-unions, to many of which work of this character is new, have alike taken steps to make State insurance easily available for their members. Under the Act societies retain their own methods of self-government, with every variation in their internal arrangements, and, if they have branches, in the degree of local autonomy and independence assigned to them.

"Two important facts require to be remembered in considering the autonomy left with approved societies under the Act. On the one hand the normal scheme of benefits is laid down in the Act itself, and is not determined, as in private insurance, by the society or its members. The consequent general uniformity of benefits, and security against variation except under defined conditions, must be borne in mind in considering how the requirements of the Act as to self-government were translated into effect in the rules of particular societies. On the other hand, successful administration of the benefits laid down in the Act depends upon societies themselves, who have as great an interest as in private insurance in securing efficiency and economy. There is no common fund out of which benefits are payable. The 'National Health Insurance Fund' consists of the separate credits of individual societies. Every society in paying benefit is drawing on its own credit and spending its own money. Any undue laxity may impose upon the society, when it has undergone a valuation, the necessity of making a levy, or of reducing the rate of benefit which it pays to its members; while, conversely, economical administration may enable a society to provide additional benefits.

"*Insured Persons in October, 1912, after First Quarter's Working of System.*

	Members of Approved Societies.	Deposit Contributors.
"England	10,325,000	395,021
Scotland	1,513,540	27,169
Ireland	684,360	15,760
Totals	12,522,900	437,950"

Trade-unions.

Eight trade-unions were registered during the year, viz.: The Oamaru Waterside Workers' Union; the Southland Freezing-works Employees' Union; the Puponga Trade-union of Workers; the Auckland Waterside Trade-union of Workers; the Point Elizabeth State Miners' Trade-union; the Westport Waterside Workers' Union; the Millerton Mine-workers' Union; the Wakamarina Miners and Workers' Trade-union.

The Southland Freezing-works Employees' Union cancelled its registration during the year.

There were 39 unions on the register at the end of the year.

Complete amendments of rules: Wellington Waterside Workers' Union and Point Elizabeth State Miners' Trade-union.

Partial amendments of rules: Lyttelton Stevedores' Trade-union and Auckland Waterside Trade-union of Workers.

Incorporated Societies Act.

During 1913 there were 94 societies, clubs, or associations incorporated under this Act, and amendments of rules of 46 societies were accepted. Two societies were wound up and one dissolved. On the 31st December, 1913, there were 883 incorporated bodies on the register.

EXPLANATORY NOTE OF TERMS USED IN REPORT.

A.O.F.	Ancient Order of Foresters.
A.O.S.	Ancient Order of Shepherds.
B.U.O.O.F.	British United Order of Odd Fellows.
H.A.C.B.S.	Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society.
I.F.S.	Isolated friendly society.
I.O.G.T.	Independent Order of Good Templars.
I.O.O.F.	Independent Order of Odd Fellows.
I.O.R.	Independent Order of Rechabites.
M.U.I.O.O.F.	Manchester Unity Independent Order of Odd Fellows.
N.I.O.O.F.	National Independent Order of Odd Fellows.
P.A.F.S.A.	Protestant Alliance Friendly Society of Australasia.
S.A.S.	Specially authorized society.
S.D.T.	Sons and Daughters of Temperance.
U.A.O.D.	United Ancient Order of Druids.
W.M.C.	Working-men's Club.