

7. DISSOLUTIONS.

- (1.) Primitive Methodist Mutual Aid Society, Dunedin.
- (2.) New Plymouth Friendly Society, New Plymouth, with a view to reconstruction on a new basis.

	No. of members.	Funds.
Primitive Methodist Mutual Aid Society ...	12	£14 8 6
New Plymouth Friendly Society ...	125	3,056 17 1

The New Plymouth Friendly Society is interesting* as having been the first society in the colony to register, and also as being, so far as is known, the oldest society in New Zealand. It has for some time past been in an approximately stationary state as regards number of members—the numbers of admissions and departures having been very small, and about evenly balanced. Its future progress, when reconstituted, deserves to be watched with very great interest. It has hitherto charged a uniform contribution of 2s. 6d. per month, together with a small extra annual contribution for members entering at the higher ages, for a scale of benefits slightly higher than that guaranteed by most colonial branches of the two great English orders, though with a saving clause as regards payments in *protracted* sickness; but, as far back as its operations have been watched by the Registry Office, it has realized a very high rate of interest on its funds. The average age of its members at the time of dissolution was about 42.

8. NOTICE OF CANCELLATION.

The Loyal Goldsborough Lodge, pronounced insolvent by its valuer (Mr. Leslie), desiring to amalgamate with the Loyal Waimea Lodge, of the same district, a mutual agreement was arrived at, and a *de facto* amalgamation took place. On the Registrar being informed of this, he intimated to the Goldsborough Lodge that, until the provisions of section 22 of the Act were complied with, the amalgamation would be illegal, and the trustees of the Goldsborough Lodge could not be relieved of their responsibility for the funds transferred. It was found impracticable, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, to comply with these provisions, and the difficulty was obviated by a transfer (by the method known as “clearance”) of all members of the Goldsborough Lodge to the Waimea Lodge. The former had thus ceased to exist through lack of members, and section 11 (1, b) of the Act became applicable. Notice of cancellation of registry was immediately given to the lodge; and effect will be given to this on the 23rd August next in the event of there being no valid objection previously urged.

9. SPECIAL AUTHORITY UNDER SEC. 7 (5) OF THE ACT.

The Governor has authorized the following as a purpose to which the facilities of the Friendly Societies Act ought to be extended:—

“The promotion of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks.”

This special authority was given in response to a request preferred by the Independent Order of Good Templars. Not being a benefit society, this order could not register under section 7 (1) of the Act; neither did it seem possible to bring it within the scope of subsections (3) or (4).

But, although this authority was given on the 8th December, 1879, and the fact intimated to the Secretary of the Grand Lodge, I.O.G.T., on the 9th, the Registrar has received no further communication from this society.

II.—WORKING OF THE AMENDMENT ACT OF 1878.

The Registrar has to report that, except in regard to two of its provisions, the Amendment Act has so far worked very smoothly and well. The information required under section 4 has been in general furnished—sometimes with evidence of cheerfulness, and certainly not with greater reluctance than the information required under section 13 of the principal Act. In two particulars only has special reluctance been shown in a few instances—the furnishing of the names of members, and the furnishing of information respecting the wives of members.

It is the 7th section of the Act which appears to have given greatest trouble. It has done so in two ways, and in each case the trouble has proceeded solely from the Provincial District of Otago. The Odd Fellows and the Foresters of that district are both affected by this section, though in different ways. The former had since 1874 adopted the practice of crediting all interest beyond 4 per cent. to the Management Funds of their lodges; the latter have been in the habit of paying their court surgeon and other medical expenses out of the Sick and Funeral Funds of the courts. Both these practices became illegal by the Amendment Act of 1878. Yet the returns for 1879 show that in five out of the six registered courts of the United Otago District of Foresters from which returns have been received, the malpractice was continued during that year; while in the case of the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows, although the law appears to have been obeyed by nearly all the lodges, and the district rules have been remodelled so as to comply with the Act, a petition has been presented to Parliament praying that this special prohibition should be rescinded. The Foresters' courts were communicated with on the subject of their breach of the law; but, as the District had recently registered rules which would have the effect of preventing a repetition of the malpractice, no prosecution was instituted. In the case of the Odd Fellows a letter was sent to the District Secretary (8th August, 1879) which, on account of its containing information useful to all societies, it may be desirable to quote *in extenso*:—

“SIR,—It having come under my notice that a petition is being circulated amongst the various lodges† of the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows, with the object of obtaining an alteration of the law in respect to the appropriation of interest earned by the benefit funds of friendly societies, I deem it my duty to address to you a short explanation of the grounds on which this portion of the law is

* It is also interesting as being the only true example in New Zealand of the isolated local friendly society, which is so common in England, but which, unlike the system of the affiliated orders, does not appear to have been transplanted to any great extent to the Australasian Colonies. Some statistics respecting it are given in Schedule IV. to this Report.

† That is, amongst the lodges of the Otago District of Odd Fellows only. The other districts are perfectly sound in their practice on this head.