

After examination of the returns and correspondence with a view to the correction of inaccuracies the facts were first of all transcribed on to cards, one card being allotted to each member. These cards were then sorted according to the years of birth of the members, the cards of each "Lodge" or other body being, however, kept separate. The data contained on the cards were then transferred to sheets, the totals of which form the basis of the experience tables I now submit.

The total number of members at the commencement of the quinquennium was 4,003; 3,719 new members were admitted during the quinquennium, including a comparatively small number transferred from other lodges, courts, &c.; 2,526 members withdrew, and 174 members died. As already stated, one body furnished a return for the last three years of the quinquennium only; and, as a consequence of this, the number of members remaining at its close, who enter into this experience, was 5,218. The total number of members under observation during any part of the five years was 7,918, and the number of years of life under observation was approximately 23,946½. The number of years of life has been calculated on the assumption that each member admitted, withdrawing, or dying during the quinquennium was under observation for six months, on an average, of the calendar year during which he was admitted, withdrew, or died. To have made a more accurate calculation would have required more time and clerical assistance than I had at my disposal. I consider the approximation sufficiently close for the purposes of this report.

The number of members admitted, withdrawing, and remaining, and the sickness and mortality experience, classified according to the ages of the members, are given for each of the five years separately in Schedule I. hereto. The ages of members are in all cases the ages at the commencement of the calendar year. The summary for the whole quinquennium 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.	
Under 20	1,197'5	783	126	10	...	Weeks. days.
20 and under 25	3,417'0	1,019	513	14	2	701 3
25 " 30	4,120'5	794	590	27	7	1,521 2
30 " 35	6,016'5	705	682	40	18	2,117 2
35 " 40	5,108'0	332	416	36	22	4,180 5
40 " 45	2,668'5	57	127	31	21	4,850 0
45 " 50	924'5	14	27	6	4	3,166 2
50 " 55	205'5	...	7	4	3	791 1
55 " 60	63'5	2	2	1	2	549 6
60 " 65	49'5	...	1	2	...	172 3
65 " 70	13'5	1	...	461 2
70 and upwards	8'5	...	1	355 5
Unspecified	153'5	13	34	2	...	333 3
Totals	23946'5	3,719	2,526	174	79	41 4

The data exhibited in this table require comment under the five heads of age, admissions, withdrawals, mortality, and sickness.

1. *Ages of Members.*—As might have been expected from the fact that all societies in New Zealand are necessarily of recent establishment, and from the ages at which persons become members of friendly societies, the great bulk of the members included in this experience were young and middle-aged. Considerably more than half were born subsequently to the year 1840; very few indeed before 1820. The following table shows the percentage of members falling under the various quinquennial groups of age at the five points of time (1st January, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, and 1877) for which my sheets furnished data. The percentages for the 31st December, 1880, given in your Fourth Report to Parliament, pages 13 and 14, are added for purposes of comparison:—

Ages of Members.	Percentages of Members on 1st January,					Percentages for 31st December, 1880.
	1873.	1874.	1875.	1876.	1877.	
Under 20	2'80	3'92	4'22	4'31	3'26	3'19
20 and under 25	11'39	11'19	12'93	15'47	15'71	15'45
25 " 30	21'16	18'22	16'92	15'39	15'40	19'98
30 " 35	29'83	28'68	26'34	23'59	21'64	18'01
35 " 40	20'81	21'08	22'04	22'66	23'20	18'38
40 " 45	9'22	11'05	11'84	12'04	13'23	14'25
45 " 50	2'60	3'73	3'67	4'23	5'30	7'05
50 " 55	0'57	0'68	0'71	1'12	1'29	2'52
55 " 60	0'25	0'30	0'27	0'27	0'27	0'78
60 " 65	0'22	0'26	0'25	0'19	0'17	0'27
65 " 70	0'05	0'05	0'04	0'08	0'08	0'08
70 and upwards	0'05	0'02	0'02	0'04	0'06	0'04
Unspecified.	1'05	0'82	0'73	0'62	0'40	..
Totals	100'00	100'00	100'00	100'00	100'00	100'00

It will be seen that, as might have been expected, the percentage of members over 35 increased steadily during the quinquennium; also that the percentages of members at all age-periods between 40 and 65 were greater on the 31st December 1880, than at any time during the quinquennium. It may be said, in general terms, that the proportion of old and elderly members in all New Zealand societies is steadily increasing from year to year, and that it must be expected to increase for many