

30. During the years 1894 and 1895 the Hope of Napier Tent, I.O.R., suffered a heavy loss. The wife of the secretary was convicted of obtaining, by means of forged cheques on the bank in which the funds of the tent were deposited, the sum of £230 5s. It is stated that she also appropriated money belonging to the tent which her husband had intrusted to her to pay into the bank to the credit of the tent. £120 has since been made good by the bank.

31. In 1894 the secretary of Court Rising Sun, Hawke's Bay District, A.O.F., was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for embezzlement from various funds, including £63 5s. 4d. belonging to the court. The court held a guarantee policy in the New Zealand Foresters' Guarantee Association, covering £25 only. To the claim for compensation the association replied that they were advised that they were not liable, on the ground of gross irregularity in the conduct of the business of the court, but offered to refer the matter to the Registrar. Subsequently the association offered to pay half the claim, which the district, acting on behalf of the court, refused to accept. The Registrar may say that he does not understand from the correspondence whether, by the association's offer to refer the matter to him, it was proposed to submit to him the sole question of legal liability under the terms of the contract, or, if not that, what was the exact nature of the reference intended.

32. In 1895 the treasurer of the Kaiapoi Lodge, M.U.I.O.O.F., was a defaulter to the amount of £42 9s. 10d., and on conviction for this and another like offence was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. The loss was covered by a policy in the New Zealand Friendly Societies' Mutual Fidelity Guarantee Association.

33. A valuable paper on the rates of mortality and the causes of death in New Zealand, prepared by Mr. George Leslie, Assistant Actuary, Government Life Insurance Department, was published in *The New Zealand Journal of Insurance, Mining, and Finance*, in 1895, and reprinted in pamphlet form. The generally light mortality of New Zealand was known already. Mr. Leslie's detailed investigation brings out a favourable result all along the line from infancy to old age. Comparison of the mortality of male members of New Zealand friendly societies with Mr. Leslie's total male population table is, as might be expected, favourable to the friendly societies, the natural effect of membership being a selection of good lives. The difference is especially marked between the ages of thirty and fifty.

34. In England a friendly societies' amending Act was passed in 1895, the most important provision of which is that relating to membership of minors.

The rules of a registered society or branch may provide for the admission of a person under twenty-one years of age but above one year of age as a member, and any such member may, if he is over sixteen years, by himself, and if he is under that age, by his parent or guardian, execute all instruments and give all acquittances necessary to be executed or given under the rules, but shall not be a member of the committee of management, or a trustee, manager, or treasurer of the society or branch.

35. The first report of the Public Actuary in South Australia relating to friendly societies was issued in 1895. The Public Actuary, who was appointed under the friendly societies' amending Act of 1892, is virtually Registrar, although not so designated. The report contains the oft-repeated record of inadequate contributions. For many years the deficiencies have been increasing, and the present members have to face a very serious position. It will be interesting to see how many of the societies will attempt a real financial reform. While the societies of the colony are to be congratulated on the appointment of an able specialist, it remains a matter for lasting regret that the valuable experience of such a large membership has been for more than a generation running to waste, and that when the expert is called in he has to find his facts outside the experience of the societies of the colony, for lack of accurate observation and scientific tabulation of their own past history.

36. A benefit society for women has been recently established in London. The society is open to persons in all parts of England. Six tables of contributions have been calculated by Mr. R. P. Hardy, F.I.A. The limit of age at admission is thirty-six. Contributions may be made free of cost through any Post-Office Savings-Bank account.

37. In order to avoid the use of the term "female," as applied to branches, an excellent suggestion has been made to call a lodge exclusively for women a "sisters' lodge." It is to be hoped that it is not too late to get rid of the accustomed misnomer.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS.

38. The summary of the report of the English Royal Commission on the Aged Poor contains the following paragraph:—

We have carefully examined the various schemes for State assistance to the aged which have been submitted to us, and, bearing in mind the great labour and thought expended on them, and the high public spirit and deep sympathy with suffering which inspired their authors, we regret that, in view of the financial and economic difficulties involved, we have been unable to recommend the adoption of any of the schemes as yet suggested, whether for endowment or for assisted insurance.

The Commissioners refer to the "unpopularity of deferred annuities." May not such unpopularity be due to the fact that the income of a large percentage of wage-earners in England is insufficient to enable them to make this provision, that there are more pressing claims, and that the money which they would otherwise gladly devote to this form of insurance is better used when spent on the immediate needs of themselves and of those dependent on them. Is it the duty of parents to stint themselves and their children in those things which are necessary for a healthy life in order that they may lay by for old age? Would this be economy from a national point of view? It is argued that, in failing to recognise provision for old age as an urgent need, workers practically rest content with wages during working-years which are insufficient to supply the wants of the whole of life. Surely this is an admission that some workers are unable to purchase an old-age pension out of their present wages. Should such, then, be condemned for failing to do that which is impossible? If those who can provide for old age neglect to do so they must take the consequences. This introduces the question of the necessity of discrimination, so that the industrious