

STATISTICS OF MEMBERSHIP AND FUNDS.

The following table shows the membership of 727 lodges* of the Dominion, for the year 1916 :—

Number of members, 1st January	..	..	..	..	73,027
Number admitted by—					
Initiation, &c.	..	..	..	..	2,037
Clearance	..	..	..	..	541
					2,578
					75,605
Number who died	..	..	..	..	977
Number left by—					
Clearance	..	..	..	..	566
Arrears, &c.	..	..	..	..	3,702
					5,245
Number of members at 31st December	..	..	..	..	70,360

These figures show therefore a decrease in membership equal to 3·7 per cent. for the year, which is characteristic of the movement in all countries at the present time, due to the diversion of young lives to active service and the restricted initiation policy operating in societies.

The total funds of the societies and branches as on the 31st December, 1916, amounted to £1,954,940, made up as follows: Sick and Funeral Funds (inclusive of amounts transferred to special funds out of surplus), £1,782,635; Medical and Management Funds, goods, &c., £172,305. Dividing the total funds by the number of members at the end of the year it is found the average capital per member is now £27 15s. 8d.

Taking the several years 1907–1916, the number of lodges whose returns were tabulated, the number of members, total funds, and average capital per member at the end of each year were as under :—

Year.	Number of Lodges tabulated.	Number of Members.	Total Funds.	Average Capital.
			£	£ s. d.
1907	516	56,817	1,118,217	19 13 7
1908	505	58,517	1,123,886	19 4 1
1909	567	64,428	1,260,297	19 13 1
1910	609	68,006	1,367,282	20 2 1
1911	658	71,771	1,441,853	20 1 8
1912	664	73,243	1,553,839	21 4 2
1913	681	73,691	1,643,177	22 6 0
1914	717	74,074	1,744,456	23 11 0
1915	728	73,027	1,852,255	25 7 4
1916	727	70,360	1,954,940	27 15 8

The above figures include the latest statistics received from lodges.

The following statement shows the disposal of the total funds (including those of the central bodies) as on 31st December, 1916 :—

Funds.	Assets.
£	£
Sick and Funeral Funds 1,727,583	Investments at interest 1,651,856
Surplus Appropriation Funds, &c. .. 55,052	Value of land and buildings 199,417
Management Funds, goods, &c. .. 91,605	Cash not bearing interest 61,622
Widow and Orphans' Funds 15,235	Value of goods 14,119
Distress, Benevolent Funds, &c. .. 65,465	Other assets 24,971
	Owing by Management Fund 2,955
Total £1,954,940	Total £1,954,940

The next 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 Dominion of New Zealand, according to the latest received statistics, arranged in order of membership :—

State or Dominion.	Date of Return.	Number of Lodges.	Number of Members.	Amount of Funds.	Capital per Member.
				£	£ s. d.
New South Wales	31st December, 1915	1,880	178,705	1,876,827	10 10 1
Victoria	" 1915	1,533	157,750	2,775,787	17 11 11
New Zealand	" 1915	728	73,027	1,852,355	25 7 4
South Australia	" 1915	574	65,801	1,226,090	18 12 8
Queensland	" 1915	563	52,082	797,969	15 6 5
Tasmania	" 1915	207	22,881	247,420	10 16 3
Western Australia	" 1915	291	19,339	251,741	13 0 4

The average capital per member has been steadily increasing of late, but, though satisfactory from certain standpoints, this can hardly be regarded as a healthy sign—the increase being contemporaneous with the general drop in membership.

* The word "lodge," when applied to all societies, is to be understood as embracing the synonymous terms "court," "tent," &c., as used in the various orders.