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BRITISH GUIANA

A N N U A L R E P O R T

OF THE

R E G I S T R A R

OF

F R I E N D L Y S O C I E T I E S

FOR THE YEAR 1959

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REPORT of the Registrar of Friendly Societies for the year ended 31st December, 1959.

PRESENTED pursuant to Section 11 of the Friendly Societies' Ordinance, Chapter 34, as amended by the Friendly Societies' (Amendment) Ordinance, 1954.

PART I INTRODUCTION

This report deals with that part of the work of the Co-operative Department which falls under the Friendly Societies' Ordinance, Chapter 34.

Friendly societies are associations of members subscribing on a mutual basis for sickness, death, old age and other provident benefits. Registration under the Ordinance is also available to Benevolent societies, Working Men's Clubs and societies for various purposes specially authorised by the Governor-in-Council.

In 1948, Mr. A.F. and Mrs. D. Wells were appointed under Colonial Development & Welfare Research Scheme No. R225 to carry out a survey of the West Indian Friendly Society Movement. As a result of their recommendations responsibility for the registration and supervision of Friendly Societies was transferred from the Registrar of Deeds to the Commissioner for Co-operative Development as from 1st September, 1951. The main effect of their recommendations was to ensure that the general efficiency of these societies was improved and maintained.

The staff appointed to give undivided attention to this work was one accountant and four inspectors. In December 1958 the Government decided that the promotion and supervision of friendly societies should be integrated with the work of co-operative societies and that district co-operative officers should be responsible for both friendly and co-operative societies. The post of "Inspector of Friendly Societies" was accordingly redesignated "Co-operative Officer" and shown thus in the 1959 Annual Departmental Estimates. The Government's decision was put into operation in February 1959. It was also decided to return to their Department four officers who had been seconded from the Education Department to supervise school co-operative societies.

PART II GENERAL PROGRESS

During the period under review the number of societies on the register increased from 214 to 223.

Total membership in all societies increased from 57,517 to 58,242 and the liquid funds from \$187,372 to \$216,044.

There was no cancellation of the registration of any society during the year. The name of British Guiana Nurses' Association which was removed from the register in 1958 was restored in 1959.

The rules of many societies were revised and the sums granted for sick benefit were stated in the rules for the first time. Societies were advised to make a copy of their rules available to each member.

PART III - REGISTRATIONS

New Societies:

The following nine societies were registered during the year:-

Name of Society	Class of Society	Registered No.
Lord Hailes Friendly Society	Friendly	397
Kitty National Welfare Friendly Burial Society	Friendly	398
South Campbellville Sections (K & N)	Specially Authorised	399
Trinity Methodist Church Burial & Yearly Benefit Society	Friendly	400
Mahaica Indian Friendly & Burial Society	Friendly	401
Star of Bethlehem Lodge	Friendly	402
Danielstown Ratepayers Association	Specially Authorised	403
Dartmouth Ratepayers Association	Specially Authorised	404
British Guiana Nurses' Association	Benevolent	405

The following table shows particulars in respect of the societies on the register at the beginning and at the end of 1959:-

TABLE I

Class of Society	On Register at 1.1.59	Registered during the year	Cancelled or dissolved in 1959	On Register at 31.12.59
Friendly	182	5	-	187
Benevolent	12	1	-	13
Working Men's Clubs	2	-	-	2
Specially Authorised	18	3	-	21
TOTAL	214	9	-	223

Extent of Movement:

The following table indicates the distribution of the registered societies throughout the colony:-

TABLE II

TYPE	DEMERARA					BERBICE				ESSEQUIBO			Total
	George-town	East Coast	East Bank	West Coast	West Bank	N. A.	West Coast	Corentyne	Canje	Bar-tica	Coast	Interior	
Friendly	108	33	7	6	2	3	7	12	-	1	7	1	187
Benevolent	10	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	13
Working Men's Clubs	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Specially Authorised	11	3	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	4	-	21
Total (Districts)	130	39	8	6	2	4	7	13	1	1	11	1	223
Total (Counties)	185					25				13			

PART IV - COMPLAINTS, INVESTIGATIONS AND INQUIRIES

A great many complaints, both written and oral, were received and investigated during the year. In the majority of cases, the decisions of the Registrar were accepted by both parties.

Following the inquiry into the constitution, working and financial conditions of the Sunbeam System Friendly Society, the reported shortage in the funds was referred to the Police who instituted legal proceedings against the Treasurer. At the end of the year the matter was still engaging the attention of the court.

There was no application for the inspection of the affairs of any society under Section 45 of the Ordinance during 1959.

During the year a dispute between the Corinthian Lodge No. 5 and three of its members was referred to the Registrar under Section 43 of the Ordinance. The Registrar heard and determined the dispute and his order was complied with by the Lodge.

PART V - MISCELLANEOUS

Audit Fund:

Contributions totalling \$100.00 were received from five societies in respect of audits performed by the staff of the Department. At 31st December, 1959, the sum of \$230 was due to the Audit Fund by 15 societies. The balance of the fund at the end of the year was \$686.00.

Annual Audit:

The audit of the books and accounts was conducted both by the staff and by suitable auditors authorised by the Registrar. Fees received from societies for audits done by the staff were paid into the Audit Fund constituted under Section 62 of the Ordinance. At the end of the year the books of 74 societies remained to be audited.

Annual Returns:

In accordance with Section 26(a)(VI) of the Friendly Societies' Ordinance, Chapter 34, as amended by the Friendly Societies' (Amendment) Ordinance, 1954, Friendly Societies were due to file their Annual Returns for 1958 on 1st May, 1959. Reminders were issued to those societies which defaulted in this respect.

Statutory Reserve:

Section 26B of the Friendly Societies (Amendment) Ordinance provides for the setting aside annually by every society of a reserve of not less than 5% of the excess of its revenue over expenditure.

The total of the Reserve Funds in the societies at 31st December, 1959 was \$65,898.62.

It is most essential that the Reserve Fund of each dividing society be thoroughly scrutinized so as to ensure its accuracy and at the same time to detect any unauthorised withdrawal from the fund.

Revenue:

Fees amounting to \$96.86 were collected during 1959 in respect of the registration of rules, amendment of rules and for supplying certified copies of documents. This amount was paid into general revenue.

PART VI - CONCLUSION

The integration of the staff referred to earlier in this report posed many problems to those officers who had no previous training in the work of the Friendly Societies. Most of them, however, did their best under

the circumstances and the societies which were visited welcomed the advice and guidance offered by the staff.

Fair progress was maintained in the Friendly Societies Movement during 1959.

An appendix is attached showing the financial operations of registered societies during 1959.

(Sgd.) J.I. FRASER

Registrar of Friendly Societies

British Guiana.

Dated this 1st day of March, 1960.

