

Mr. William Reid, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge, Independent Order of Odd Fellows of New Zealand, was born in Ayrshire, Scotland, in 1845. He was educated at the Glasgow Collegiate School, and came to Port Chalmers in the ship "Arima," of which he was purser.

After a year in the office of Messrs. Cargill and Co., he entered the service of Messrs Mills, Dick and Co., and subsequently formed one of the party who published the "Otago Daily News" on co-operative principles. Returning to Messrs. Mills, Dick and Co., he continued with them till establishing business on his own account as a land agent, accountant and auditor. In 1877 he was elected to the important office he still holds under the Grand Lodge. Mr. Reid was married in 1872 to a daughter of Mr. Charles Reid, one of the earliest settlers, and has two sons and four daughters.

From the Otago Witness, Issue 2834, 8 July 1908, Page 53 we learn that:

Bro. William Reid, who has recently returned from Sydney, where he attended the sittings of the Grand Lodge of Australasia, 1.0.0. F., as Deputy Grand Sire of Australasia, and where he was elected Grand Sire of Australasia, was entertained on June 26, in Albany Street Hall at a welcome social by brethren and sisters of lodges in Otago district. The hall was well filled with members of the order of both sexes, and the formal welcome proceedings were varied by a programme of concert items, including vocal and instrumental solos, recitations, etc.

Bro. D. Swinton, D.D.G.M., South Otago district, who presided, said the Otago district felt it was specially honoured in that the Grand Sire was selected from among them. He believed this was the second occasion on which a New Zealander had occupied this high position. There was no one more fitted, be felt sure, to hold the position than their respected brother. (Renewed applause.) They heartily congratulated Bro. **Reid** on his promotion, and they hoped some day to 6ee him occupy the position of Grand Sire of the Sovereign Grand Lodge of America. (Applause.)

Bro W. Reid, who was warmly received, thanked the members of the order for their cordial welcome. Speaking with regard to the phenomenal growth of the organisation in recent years, he said the Grand Lodge of Australasia had jurisdiction over six States of Australasia and also in New Zealand, thus having seven subordinate Grand Lodges under its control since the first conference was held in 1881.

The number of lodges had increased from 105 to 390, the membership from 7920 to 40,542, the funds of the Grand Lodge from £9182 to £246,498, and of subordinate lodges from £36.231 to £405,485. There were no female lodges in 1881, whereas there were now 78 with a total membership of 4486. The organisation, he said, was, relatively speaking, probably increasing at a more rapid rate than any other body of its kind.

In regard to the centralisation of the sick fund, out of the seven subordinate Grand Lodges only Tasmania and Queensland had stood out of the scheme. He was appointed to represent New Zealand at the session of the Sovereign Grand Lodge in America in 1909. This was the controlling body, and had six quasi-independent grand lodges Australia, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland, and under its jurisdiction it controlled 15,687 subordinate lodges (with a membership of over a million and a-quarter), and the total membership (including the Rebecca [female] members) was 1,709.533. Last year the total relief paid was £1,024,865.

The American order, remarked Mr Reid, was very progressive in New Zealand, especially in Auckland. North Canterbury, and Otago.

During the evening musical and recitation items were contributed by many, refreshments were served during the evening, and a very enjoyable dance wound up the proceedings.

Evening Post, 27 October 1920, Page 8 reports that:

the thirteenth triennial session of the 1.0.0. F. was held in Dunedin, the first occasion the Grand Lodge of Australasia has met in the Dominion. The delegates represented six Grand Lodges of the six Australian States, as well as the Grand Lodge of New Zealand. A civic' reception was accorded the delegates yesterday. The report of the Acting Grand Sire (Bro. Gilder) was to the effect that despite the heavy loss in membership owing to the war and the influenza epidemic, the Jurisdiction reports a general increase during last year. The report of the Grand Secretary (Bro. J. C. Smith) stated that during the last six years £256,851 had been paid in sick benefits, £93,585 for the maintenance of orphans. £9055 to widowed families—a total of £359,491, which does not include expenditure on medical benefits, estimated at £250,000.

The Queensland Jurisdiction had taken up the matter of establishing a home for orphans and aged Oddfellows. Many amendments to the constitution were considered, the most important of which was one submitted by the Dominion members that the colour-line be abrogated, as far as New Zealand is concerned, by allowing the admission of Maori members. The sovereign lodge is to be approached to sanction such alteration. It was decided to recognise the sterling work of the Grand Secretary of the New Zealand Jurisdiction, Past Grand Sire Bro. William Reid, by presenting him with the "Honourable Veteran" Jewel, which is obtainable only after 50 years' continuous membership in the Order.

Mr Reid was married twice and there were four children – two sons and two daughters by his first wife.

William Reid died aged 80 years on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1925, and is buried in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery and commemorated by a beautiful black granite obelisk.

Prepared by Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand (<a href="www.cemeteries.org.nz">www.cemeteries.org.nz</a>) from information in PapersPast website.