

perty was then returned as being worth £3,455, subject to a mortgage of £1,800. This estimate was taken as correct, and the balance-sheet showed a surplus. At the next quinquennial valuation the actuary reported a large deficiency, due partly to depreciation in the value of the property. When, after the fire, the mortgagee had been paid out of the money received from the insurance office and the land sold, all that the lodge had to show for capital and interest, which should have amounted to between £2,000 and £3,000, was £750.

32. There is a manifest growth of opinion in favour of the formation of branches of friendly societies for women. In the absence of statistical knowledge as to women's liability to sickness, there is a difficulty in fixing a scale of contributions for this benefit. The Manchester Unity in England issued tables compiled by Mr. Watson, the society's actuary, which appear to be based on the expectation of a somewhat higher sickness-rate among women than among men. As, therefore, the contributions must be regarded as experimental, and may require alteration, it is desirable to get rid of the idea which finds occasional expression that a change of contribution or benefit adverse to the contributor or beneficiary is a breach of contract. Unless the rates, if found inadequate, are revised, the entire loss resulting from the inadequacy, instead of being fairly distributed, will fall entirely on a section of the members. The assets and liabilities of a mutual assurance society are valued periodically, in order that it may be ascertained whether a readjustment of contributions and benefits should be made.

33. The report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies in New South Wales contains the following paragraph relating to branches of an order established outside the jurisdiction of the colony, in which the said branches are registered as separate societies :—

Another difficulty has arisen in connection with the registration in former years of certain societies which are merely branches of other associations, whose head-quarters are not in New South Wales, and whose funds to meet death benefits, and certain other contingencies, are outside the jurisdiction of the local Courts. The societies of this character have been advised that they must take such steps as will be necessary to maintain their funds within the Colony of New South Wales, and to dissociate themselves from Orders outside jurisdiction.

34. An official report to the United States Government on the working of the compulsory insurance laws of Germany has been prepared by Mr. John Graham Brooks. The development of a national experiment on so vast a scale cannot fail to afford valuable information, not only in respect of the comparative merits of voluntary thrift and compulsory insurance, but also on practical questions common to both systems. In the author's opinion, the benefits of the scheme should not be regarded as limited to the pecuniary relief of unavoidable poverty. Outside the economic estimate, a high value should, he thinks, be assigned to the moral effect, the cultivation of the ethical sentiment, the infectious recognition of social obligations, as well as to the educational results, the improvement in methods for the prevention of accidents and sickness and in the curative treatment of patients, increased facilities for discrimination between genuine and feigned distress and for detection of malingerers, and also to the intellectual training of the numerous officials of an important public department. Although it does not seem that free associations are likely to survive in the overshadowing presence of a national organization, yet—

The advocates of the scheme claim that every essential of a vigorous individual initiative has been preserved. They refuse to admit that this State system is in any way opposed to self-help, but is rather a means of securing real and independent action to the masses.

Because individual effort covered so small a portion of the ground, the huge sum total of misery unprovided for supplied a strong argument in favour of the new departure.

Voluntary insurance left millions of men and women exposed to conditions under which sickness, accident, and premature death would work extremes of suffering, which society had no right to permit if any practical way of avoiding it could be reached.

While enforced contribution for the various benefits is doubtless of advantage to some, it remains an open question whether the material prosperity of wage-earners as a class will be improved under a general system of compulsion; nor is it possible to foretell whether there will be a balance of gain or loss to the nation when the ethical as well as the economic results come to be weighed.

TRADE-UNIONS.

35. Registrations under "The Trade Union Act, 1878," and transactions relating to registered trade-unions during the year 1894 were as under :—

Registrations.

36. The Wellington Typographical Society and the Otago Typographical Association were registered.

Amalgamation.

37. The Oamaru Branch of the Amalgamated Shearers' and General Labourers' Union of New Zealand amalgamated with the Amalgamated Shearers' and Labourers' Union of New Zealand.

Amendments of Rules.

38. A complete amendment of the rules of the Shipmasters' Association, and partial amendments of the Christchurch Operative Bootmakers' Society and of the Otago Typographical Association, were registered.

Changes of Name.

39. The name of the New Zealand Federated Bootmakers' Union was changed to "The New Zealand Federated Boot-trade Union," and the name of the Amalgamated Shearers' and Labourers' Union of New Zealand was changed to "The New Zealand Workers' Union."

40. A list of registered trade-unions, as on 31st December, 1894, is given in Appendix III.

EDMUND MASON,

Registrar of Friendly Societies and Trade-unions.

April, 1895.