

INSURANCE FOR DISABLED MEN

How disabled soldiers who have become unfit to secure insurance in the ordinary way are to be given the privileges of insurance, is a subject which is interesting insurance men throughout Canada. On the one hand it could scarcely be expected that the companies should accept such risks at the usual rates, and the strongest objection is felt in Canada against the establishment of any government insurance scheme as such a system could not be profitably operated on a small scale, and no extensive system of state insurance is wanted here. In an article in *The Monetary Times* last week Mr. L. M. Bidwell, who is himself a returned man and a writer of life insurance, discussed a plan for the writing of this business by the companies, the additional risk to be met by a contribution from the Dominion government. A circular letter issued by Mr. William Thompson, president of the Insurance Federation of British Columbia, was also given in last week's issue relative to the same subject. How this question is being dealt with in other countries is, therefore, a matter of interest. The following official notice has been issued by the British government:—

"The government have had under consideration the question of the application of the Workmen's Compensation Act in the case of disabled soldiers, sailors, or airmen returning to civil employment. A fear has been expressed that their disability may make such men more liable to meet with accident in the course of employment, or to make the results of an accident more serious than they would be normally, and though experience in the past has not shown that on the whole the compensation charge in respect of men who have met with injuries is appreciably higher than the normal, the government desire to remove any cause which might place a difficulty in the way of such men obtaining employment. They have, therefore, decided in principle that any increased charge incurred for compensation in respect of disabled men shall be borne by the state, and they have adopted a scheme which has been worked out by a home office committee under the chairmanship of Lord Peel.

"The scheme proposes that an arrangement should be entered into by the government with the insurance companies by which the companies would undertake to insure disabled men at the general rate for the occupation, and not to increase their general rates in the future as the result of the employment of disabled men, the government under certain conditions to reimburse the loss (if any) which the companies may incur. It will be open, under the scheme, to employers who do not wish to insure in respect of their general liability, to insure their disabled men only at the ordinary rate."

EXORBITANT SHIPBUILDING COSTS

A pointed criticism of the shipbuilding programme of the United States government was expressed recently by Mr. C. Hannevig, president of the Dominion Shipbuilding Company of Toronto. He ventured the prediction that the United States could not compete with Great Britain in the building, managing and sailing of ships, and ridiculed the statement credited to the chairman of the United States shipping board that the United States had set for its goal supremacy in ocean trade. As the shipbuilding programme of our own Canadian government was also prepared at a time when costs were at a maximum much of this criticism applies here.

"The American shipbuilding programme will prove in time to be a stupendous farce," stated Mr. Hannevig. "It had become an orgy of extravagance and miscalculation. The cost which is being incurred in building tonnage is so high, so wildly beyond the mark, that rates of freight can never justify it. When the shipping board embarked upon hundreds and thousands of contracts the price was estimated at about \$168 a ton. The position quickly became exploited by labor, with the result that the original contract prices

were abandoned by State officials and the cost per deadweight ton is running from \$250 up to \$400.

"No private shipowners will ever dream of purchasing ships at such a price. The whole scheme was rushed and miscalculated. Moreover, much of the workmanship is so inferior, especially in regard to the wooden ships, that repairs will bring about another ruinous cost."

CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISE

It is a rather extraordinary thing at the present time for any organization which has any purpose approaching a patriotic one to commence operations without first appealing to a government or a municipality for financial assistance. That independence and individual initiative for which the British race has been so long given credit, have been, it seems, in danger of being lost. Now, however, a group of progressive war veterans have organized the "Grand Army of Canada" for the purpose of carrying out enterprises and looking after the general welfare of their members. One of the planks in the platform of this organization is that it shall do its own financing entirely; no funds should be received from any outside source whatever. Among other enterprises co-operative stores will be opened. These will presumably be open to public patronage and will deserve public assistance. The profits, after a dividend of six or six and one-half per cent. has been paid, are to be devoted to a relief fund for members of the organization.

TAX REFORM VOTED DOWN

The city council of Toronto on January 27th discussed a proposal to apply to the provincial legislature for power to assess real estate improvements at a lower percentage of value than vacant land. The legislation committee of the council favored making the application, but the board of control recommended against it and the council voted it down by 17 to 9. The assessment commissioner, Mr. J. C. Forman, is opposed to the taxation of land on a different basis from improvements.

One of the difficulties presented was the fact that the city taxes are now very heavy, and it is not considered wise by some aldermen to experiment until the city is in a better financial position. Toronto already owns one million feet of vacant land, and the result of such a change would be that still further vacant land would come into the hands of the city for taxes.

The half-yearly index of *The Monetary Times*, July to December, 1918, is now ready, and a copy may be had on application.

The habit of forming labor unions has extended to insurance agents. A meeting of the Industrial Insurance Agents of Montreal was held on January 25th for the purpose of forming a union.

\$60,000,000 FOR WHEAT CREDITS

The minister of finance has announced, in answer to an enquiry as to wheat credits, that the Dominion government had, in addition to the outside funds which the British government had been able to provide, authorized, to date from the proceeds of the Victory Loan, credits of over \$60,000,000, of which \$11,000,000 had not yet been expended and was at the credit of the Imperial government for the purpose of buying wheat. In addition to this assistance, arrangements had been made with the Canadian banks for the financing of the wheat in elevators pending the delivery and sale to the Wheat Export Co.