

about 200,000 tons less of finished iron to be made in the district mentioned. A month or five weeks ago the requirements at the Birmingham quarterly meeting were heavy, but the state of the labor market caused makers to decline them and some of the offered contracts went to Wales or to the Cleveland district.

Prices and prospects in the Glasgow and Middlesborough iron districts have not much varied during the last three months; but the feeling is strong in Great Britain that present values will be no lower, inasmuch as stocks generally have been so much reduced. The quotation for Glasgow iron at the beginning of August was about £2 7s. 6d., and appearance indicates that this price will rule rather higher as the year advances. Cleveland iron was at 30th July stationary at £1 19s., and the tendency in this case is also slightly upwards. Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire pig iron makers reported a steady, though not improving demand, with no intention to increase production. "On the whole," concludes the *Trade Journal*, "there is no immediate prospect of any general or substantial rise in prices for either finished iron or pig iron, but at the same time there are good reasons to believe that a fair average trade will be done in the autumn."

It would seem that the Staffordshire ironworkers, observing the higher tendency of prices in June for inferior qualities of iron, and observing also that more iron was likely to be required, declined to stand by the terms of their agreement which required their wages for June to be based upon the average price of finished iron over the three months ended with May. The reduction (for it happened to be a reduction, instead of a rise) was the natural outcome of the sliding scale, but the men's intelligence or philosophy was not equal to the occasion. "The strike leaders," we quote an English newspaper, "defied public opinion, insulted and vilified the men's own representatives at the Arbitration Board, and violently stopped the works in the cases where the men had quietly accepted the reduced wages. The firmness of the masters, however, finally prevailed, and the lower wages have been accepted."

Shipbuilders on the Clyde, the Tyne and the Thames, are very busy, indeed they have hardly ever before been so busy; but still the out-put of ship-building iron has outrun even this unusual demand, and the production of that description is overdone. Hence prices have gone down to the very lowest notch, and some of the weaker makers of ship plates are being driven out of the trade. There has been overproduction, too, in bars and angle iron, and the works in the north of England were as a rule working only five days a week. The July demand for pigs has been more lively, with tolerably heavy shipments. In June they reached 94,154 tons, a high figure; for first half July they were 48,800 tons, and were expected to reach if not to exceed 100,000 tons for that month. Russia and Italy it appears, have been taking unusual quantities. Stocks of Cleveland iron, for example, fell 12,713 tons during June, and Messrs. Connals' Glasgow stock showed a reduction month by month.

A trade letter to Martineau & Smith quotes Bessemer iron 52s. to 52s. 6d. at close of July; No. 1 pig, 43s.; No. 3, 39s. 6d. to 40s., f.o.b. Tees. Prices of manufactured iron about: Ship plates, £6; boiler plates, £7; sheets, £7 5s. to £7 10s.; common bars, £5 15s.; best bars, £6 5s.; best best ditto, £7 5s.; ship angles, £5 12s. 6d.; iron rails (heavy), £5; light, £5 5s.; fish plates, £5 5s. to £5 7s. 6d., all less 2½ per cent. commission. Puddled bars, £3 12s. 6d. to £3 16s. nett. As to steel the same authority says: Steel rail makers have quite as much as they can do to make a profit at £4 12s. 6d. to £4 13s. per ton. It looks rather as if some of the leading English steel rail works may be brought to a stand if more work does not soon arrive from America or elsewhere. The steel casting trade is doing fairly. The Glasgow *Herald* of August 6th calls the Scotch iron market firmer for the week with a good foreign demand and quotations steady for special brands. Gartsherrie and Summerlee pig iron 57s., and Coltness 61s.

CO-OPERATIVE LIFE ASSURANCE.

In a recent number of the *London Review*, a journal whose sound views upon insurance matters we have had frequent occasion to quote, we find an argument which we commend to such of our readers as may have been impressed by the claims of certain latter-day "Benevolent Assurance" schemes:

"In referring to co-operative life assurance, it is obvious that there must be some definition given of what is meant by this expression. It happens that discredit has been brought upon a word that otherwise is full of intelligent and valuable meaning, by the misuse which has been made of it by certain disreputable persons in the United States. All life assurance is, as a matter of fact, co-operative; but it has been reserved for speculators in a kind of business which is nothing more nor less than an organized swindle to render the very name of co-operative life assurance "a hissing and a mockery" throughout all the nations of the earth. It has been contended by the managers of these fraudulent institutions, that they are based upon principles which have been in existence in Great Britain for centuries, and which have been successfully carried out by many large and powerful associations in this country, not to speak of societies which are obviously unsound, and which can never by any possible stroke of luck recover themselves.

Reference has been made to institutions like the Odd Fellows, the Foresters, and kindred associations, which have not merely power to retrace any false steps made in the past, but the resolution to do so. It must be premised, however, that co-operative assurance on what is called the assessment plan is not practised by these societies. The assessment plan has been found by experience to be cumbersome, expensive and unreliable. It is, therefore, not used in this country, in which, it may be observed, every possible kind of insurance has been tried and tested to the uttermost. The assessment plan of insurance is the name which should be substituted for co-operative, and, in future, it would be well that this definition should be drawn."

Our co-temporary then proceeds to enquire how it has fared with even those large societies which were doing their best to ensure the solvency of their reserves, and which have been working with this intention for so long, and avers that as a matter of fact, it was discovered some years ago, after careful investigation, that the majority of the Friendly Societies of Great Britain were more or less insolvent,—that is to say, "they were insolvent as regards their contingent liabilities, although up to now they

have been able to meet all claims as they fall due." Fortunately, these societies anticipated the danger before any strain was actually experienced, and after a careful review of their position, the proper steps were taken to bring them into a solvent condition.

We quote again:

"As an illustration of how true this view of the case is, we may refer to a speech recently delivered by Mr. G. H. Pinckard, an actuary of great experience, who has found it necessary to state, that the Ancient Order of Foresters, with a revenue of £573,629, and expenditure of £438,404, and which put by during the twelve months £135,224, was yet not in a satisfactory state—in fact, that the society was insolvent. As the Odd Fellows had already been reported to be in the same condition, he thought that his hearers should not be downhearted. He further pointed out, that a contribution of the aggregate of £2 from each member would place them in a thoroughly sound condition. Under these circumstances, there was no great difficulty to get over, although they were a million sterling on the wrong side. With half a million members the work was easy, and the average subscriptions had therefore been raised with a view to gradually making both ends meet.

The difference, however, between the Foresters, the Odd Fellows, and the co-operative or assessment companies of the United States is, that the former are honestly and loyally working with the intention of doing the straightforward and proper thing by their members. If they have been misled by defective information, it is an error which experience will rectify, and the consequences of which are now distinctly seen, and in time to permit of their being obviated. This is precisely what the assessment offices in the United States do not do. It is possible that the promotion of the original companies might have been based upon a certain amount of commercial probity; but we have no hesitation in stating, that for many years past not one of these associations has been started with any more intelligible reason than that of filling the pockets of the managers and enjoying a brief but merry existence.

One thing we wish to emphatically repeat, and that is, that the assessment mode of life assurance as practised by these companies in the States is absolutely unknown in this country, and that any person claiming for his society that it is based on similar lines to institutions which have worked successfully in Great Britain, is stating that which is absolutely untrue, and which he probably also personally knows to be false."

"ORGANIZED CONTROL."

What sort of anarchist reformers the Knights of Labor would be, and what pernicious ideas of social economy and the functions of government they entertain may be learned from the views of one of the Brotherhood of Telegraphers, as published in the American journals last week:

"Every labor organization should control every industry. The change would be radical, but for the best we must look over our spectacles not always at what we have. The Government successfully controls the post office now; let it try the telegraph, and if it be successful with the telegraph, then it might go on with other industries."

This testimony was given in sober earnest, before the United States Senate Committee on Education and Labor, while investigating the recent telegraph strike, and the person who gave vent to such harebrained nonsense is Mr. McCiellan, one of the trusted heads of the body which authorized that strike. Pretty ignoramuses, these, to "govern labor."

Amusement was created by a clever letter from "J. L. F." in the *Toronto World* the other day, in which, *apropos* of the suggestion that the Government should take over the telegraph business, the writer suggested