

UNREST IN THE I. O. F.

It can hardly be considered a matter for surprise that the recent arrangements made by the Supreme Court of the Independent Order of Foresters for improving the Order's financial position have excited considerable unrest among the older members of the Order. They find themselves in the unenviable position of being compelled to surrender \$260 of every \$1,000 of the protection upon which they had been relying, and it is not in human nature to take a blow like this "lying down." Hence the indignation meetings and speeches of protest which have been held both in Eastern and Western Canada and in the United States. Even the loudly trumpeted acclamations of the Order's philanthropic activities and the "high-falutin" assurances of those in authority in the Order that all is now for the best in the best of all possible worlds have failed to create that profound impression, which with members schooled to a proper condition of servile acquiescence in the all-knowledge and all-wisdom of those in authority, they should have created. But when a man has presented to him the cold facts of a financial proposition, which, not to speak too harshly of it, has not turned out as well as he has been repeatedly assured, almost with tears, beforehand, that it would do, his natural wrath is not likely to be assuaged by libations of soft soap, however copiously they may be applied.

We sympathise with the old members, but that is about as far as we can go—and at the present time they themselves are hardly in a frame of mind when sympathy is grateful! But the simple fact is that they are the victims of a wrong-headed system. Any competent actuary could have told them years ago where they would eventually find themselves. The "I told you so" attitude is never particularly grateful, but in the case of the I. O. F. it is almost impossible to avoid it.

If the old members will accept a suggestion from us, we should recommend them to take the present opportunity of looking into their Order's investment policy. There are some facts connected therewith and referred to in the front page editorial of last week's CHRONICLE, which deserve their consideration. Both in 1911 and 1912, the returns secured by the Order from nearly a million dollars invested in real estate holdings were something well under one per cent. Do the old members consider that their use of the Temple premises is worth to them such a rental as would be required to bring this nominal return up to anything like a reasonable figure? Again, do the old members approve of a policy which places more than 50 per cent. of the amount invested by the Order itself in bonds and stocks in two undertakings in the United States? These and kindred matters are well worth the attention of the malcontents.

PUT THE BLAME ON THE RIGHT SHOULDERS.

For a long time past some people have been busy blaming the Insurance Department on account of the late appearance of the various insurance reports. THE CHRONICLE, having better information, has carefully refrained from criticism of the Department on this account and has put the blame on the Government Printing Bureau, where it ought to rest. The new short report, which is a sort of interim publication between the preliminary report and the full report in two fat volumes, came to hand this week. But it is dated May 27th. It has taken the Government Printing Bureau just over four months to get out this publication. What wonderful celerity!

If the Government Printing Bureau is overwhelmed with work, its staff ought to be added to or more of the work given out—careful regard, of course, being paid to the necessity of seeing that the work only goes to quarters of the right political colour. If it isn't overwhelmed with work, the sooner someone is put in to galvanise a little life into it the better. In any case it is unfair not to put the blame on the right shoulders. The Insurance Department in this respect is not guilty.

UNDERWRITING OUTLOOK FOR 1913.

Fire-insurance is entering upon the crucial period of the year. To date the record has been unsatisfactory. Losses have been heavy, business has been depressed, securities have touched the lowest point in recent years, and any reduction in expenses the companies may have effected has been more than offset by the increase in taxation and other charges beyond their control.

Can the closing quarter of the year turn the record of loss into one of profit? It is possible, but not according to precedent, for in the poor years the cold-weather months have usually made a bad matter worse. And yet the adverse conditions are gone or have been discounted. The abnormal losses were due largely to the prolonged and widespread drouth, and that is over. Slow business was due to the fear of tariff and currency changes, and the worst effect of this is past. The country has already adjusted itself to the new conditions, and once the uncertainty is removed a marked, although perhaps temporary activity, should be seen. Security values are looking up, and in general the outlook is brighter. But it will take a combination of the best underwriting and financial ability and good luck to show any increase in surplus for the great majority of the companies this year. The trend is for the better, and with reasonable co-operation and adherence to sound underwriting principles and practice the 1913 record may yet be made a favorable one.—*Insurance Post.*

Regardless of what effect the tariff may have on fire insurance, the best way to get lower rates is to have fewer fires.—*Argus.*

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Regret and sympathy will be expressed with Mr. W. Molson Macpherson, of Quebec, president of the Molsons Bank, in the loss of Mrs. Macpherson, who died on Tuesday, after a short illness.