give every citizen a legal right to claim an annuity on attaining a certain age, subject to such reservation as the Legislature may define. Although there is to be no increase of Imperial taxation, there is to be a readjustment of the incidence of taxation. The subsidies to local authorities out of Imperial taxation are condemned, and these are to be stopped. The amount saved is to be applied to payment of pensions. The pension list at age sixty-five will require £21,342,000, and this would be provided by transfer of the Exchequer grants, £11,314,231; the saving of outdoor relief would be £4,000,000, and suspension of the sinking funds of the National Debt, £7,654,000, leaving a margin for other claims or purposes. There is an alternative scheme for age seventy costing little more than half the other, but the proposals are too shadowy to be of practical interest. The Exchequer grants are not at all likely to be cancelled, and the sinking funds would not be suspended for a permanency.

AN ACETYLENE GAS EXPLOSION AND ITS LESSON.

Referring to the explosion of acetylene gas at Columbus Junction, Ia., which occurred on January 29, 1898, resulting in the injury of a number of people and a damage to property estimated at $2,000, the following particulars are given as to the cause of the disaster.

It appears that the apparatus had been just installed, and that the man having the device in charge was preparing to make an exhibit. In order to expediate the escape of air from the generator while the gas was being evolved, he removed several burners from the fixtures, thus providing large vents. Desiring to discover whether air or gas was escaping, he applied a lighted match to the orifice. The resulting explosion was of sufficient violence to blow out both end walls of the building, wreck the interior and seriously injure many onlookers, thus once again giving practical evidence of the wonderful energy of explosion exerted by the combination of acelytene and air when ignited.

As the formation of such explosive compound is admitted to be "an inevitable condition" incident to the installation of acetylene apparatus approved for general use in the West, repetitions of disasters of this nature may be looked for at any time in that section of the country, for, notwithstanding the assumed immunity secured by insistence upon forcing the escape of air from the generator by way of the orifice in the burner, and the proviso that machines "shall be installed by competent and reliable parties who are thoroughly familiar with acetylene," the careless and reckless "installer" will still roam about the country setting up "approved" machines, and occasionally startling the public by the record of a "blow-up," entailing the destruction of property and the maiming or the killing of innocent spectators from just such gross carelessness as marks the case under consideration.

Perhaps the insurance managers will await the chastening effect due to a series of disasters from acetylene before taking action to make the use of the same reasonably safe, but it would appear that the hazard has now been sufficiently demonstrated to warrant a concerted attempt at uniformity of regulation, based on both practice and theory, and that no more forcible arguments for the exclusion of such apparatus from insurable property could be offered than those afforded by this so-called "accident" and the admitted knowledge of the "inevitable condition" incident to installation, supplemented by the possibility of recurring accidents due to reinstallations on account of breakdown or accident to the apparatus.

The knowledge of these conditions and an appreciation of the hazards thus created should serve to emphasize the necessity for placing all classes of acetylene apparatus out of doors, and for the prohibition of any machine or device not so constructed as to eliminate the hazards due to this so-called "inevitable condition." This hazard is not an essential in the use of acetylene, as there are neither mechanical nor structural difficulties which may not be overcome in the production of apparatus which will automatically expel the air from the generator prior to the generation of the gas, and the inventive genius of the day simply awaits the necessity to overcome the difficulties.—*Ex.*

THE LAW OF SALVAGE.

The following excellent article upon the law of Salvage appeared in *The Review* (London, Eng.), and we gladly reprint it in extenso:—

"Salvage is a compensation for maritime services rendered in saving property or rescuing it from impending peril, on the sea, or wrecked on the coast of the sea, or on a public navigable river or lake, where inter-state or foreign commerce is carried on. The amount, according to the maritime law of England and the United States, rests in the sound discretion of the Court upon a full consideration of all the facts of the case. It generally far exceeds a mere remuneration *pro opere et labore*—the excess being intended, upon principles of sound public policy, not only as a reward to the particular salvor, but also as an inducement to others to render like services. If the property of an individual on land be exposed to the greatest peril, and be saved by the voluntary exertions of any person whatever; if valuable goods be rescued from a house in flames, at the imminent hazard of life by the salvor, no remuneration in the shape of salvage is allowed. The act is highly meritorious, and the service is as great as if rendered at sea. Yet the claim for salvage could not, perhaps, be supported. It is certainly not made. Let precisely the same service, at precisely the same hazard, be rendered at sea, and a very ample reward will be bestowed in the courts of justice. The allowance of a very ample compensation for those services, one very much exceeding the mere risk encountered, and labour employed in effecting them, is intended as an inducement to render them, which it is for the public interests, and for the general interests of humanity, to hold forth to those who navigate the ocean.

But while it is the policy of the law to encourage