

it has not entertained the thought that it was the intention of the Congress, if it should adopt any portion of the report, to thereby affect or disturb organizations already in existence, but rather that the findings of the committee might be a guide, or better, a standard, by which such organizations may try themselves. I have said this much in advance of the report lest some members of this body, coming here for the first time, should approach its consideration with an idea that the report, if adopted, would be ironclad, and was intended to apply to every existing Order without recourse or consent. This Congress may, if the report is found deserving, give the work of this Committee its high endorsement. That is as far as it can go. The application of the tables, or the duty of conforming to the standard, rests entirely with the individual order. If in the time to come an order is convinced that its future well-being demands a change of rates, then the tables will be ready to its hands; but until it shall of its own accord agree to a change, or the law of a State shall intervene, it will continue on its present course. I now approach with some reluctance, lest I be misunderstood, a matter of much importance, and it is a subject that will not down, but must be taken into account, and it is this: A prospective danger of adverse legislation along this very line. It cannot have escaped intelligent observation that each year indications are stronger of a desire for a more decided and far-reaching State supervision, not on the sole ground that the orders are dishonestly managed, or that any promise of protection is not as fully kept to-day as at any point in our history, or that without such supervision there is greater danger of dissolution.

In practically twenty-seven years the managers of the Fraternal Orders have secured a membership nearly, if not quite, three millions in the aggregate; have paid in benefits nearly four hundred million dollars, and carry protection to the amount of four thousand million dollars, and State supervision will come, if it comes at all, because of the great work we have accomplished, and not from the idea that men may prove dishonest.

In less than a generation, and always compelled to work against an active and unscrupulous opposition, this vast business has been built up; the business secured and managed, and four hundred million dollars paid to dependents, all at an expense for management so small as to be insignificant when compared with the expense of management of any other kind of insurance on human lives.

Is it any wonder, considering our volume of business, rivaling any other insurance business, and the terrible responsibilities resting on the few men who are managing these great trusts, that even "those who are of our house," and who trust us most, see no evil in a just and proper supervision and only our oldest and most persistent foe will ask that an improper supervision shall be forced upon us?

Because of the thousands of families whose sole dependence is in the Fraternal Orders, and because of the terrible responsibility resting on the few who manage them, I am not of those who object to, or fear a proper supervision, but I do mistrust the result should the legislature of any State, under an adverse influence, whose source needs no further allusion, formulate a table of rates with which all orders doing business in that State shall comply. Under these circumstances, would you expect any other than "Old Line rates?" It is true that in some of the States, whose officials have made care-

ful investigation, and realize what we have done and are capable of doing, there would be no reason for fear. But generally it may be advanced, with every element of probability, that other than our friends and well-wishers would have potent voice in shaping this adverse law-making should it come, and its enactment in one State will be as vicious in effect as though enacted in a dozen.

Would this cause uneasiness anywhere, did we anticipate it and were ready with tables of rates, capable of standing any actuarial test, fully adapted to our requirements, and that should meet at all points every proper demand for legislation or State supervision? Should we not, then, be in a position to defend the cause of all our members, with right and reason on our side, and would not this be such ground of vantage as to give us, not the right to demand justice (for that we have), but if driven to its use, the power to compel its concession, should adverse legislation be attempted?

#### ACTUARIAL ASSISTANCE.

Should this Congress take definite action and adopt as a proper and safe standard of minimum rates any portion of the report of said Committee, there will then be a demand for more or less actuarial assistance. To meet this prospective demand, I suggest for your consideration an amendment to our Constitution, providing for an additional Standing Committee, upon whom shall devolve the duty of collating, from year to year, the facts bearing upon the mortuary conditions of the Orders. The chairman of this Committee should receive a proper compensation for the performance of his duties, and any Order should be at liberty to call on the Committee for any actuarial aid required.

As all the Orders would have one common source for aid and counsel, the expense would be so many times smaller than if each were required to consult such actuary as they might independently secure, it might not be considered unfair if each Order was required to pay all, or at least a portion, of the expense incurred for this purpose.

The Executive Committee would have no difficulty in finding in this body suitable material for such Committee.

#### INSURANCE COMMISSIONERS' CONVENTION.

At the Session of 1897 the following resolution was adopted:

"Resolved, That the President be requested at his discretion to appoint one representative to the next Annual Session of the Insurance Commissioners, for the purposes outlined in the resolution of Brother Talbot, and to establish cordial relations with the officials representing the various insurance departments."

In view of great possibilities of good that might be developed by the attendance of a proper Committee, I increased the number to three, and Brethren John Haskell Butler, John J. Acker and Mr. Secretary Sackett kindly consented to attend the Convention, and we had the services of these gentlemen for several days for bare expenses of the journey.

The result of their efforts will be laid before you in a report of the chairman, Judge Butler. In this connection I would state that a very interesting and valuable paper was submitted by Brother Warnock, and would recommend that it be made a part of the report of the Committee, or published with it, so that it will be a part of our records.

(Concluded in January Issue.)