

superfluous. He would be a reckless financier indeed who presumed to legislate on a social financial question of this kind without taking friendly societies into consideration; even a party with a majority of three hundred could not do it without raising a hurricane. Working Men's Friendly Societies have long been a power in this country. Conducted on conservative lines they have made steady progress until, in the case of the big orders like the Odd Fellows and Foresters, both their membership and their accumulated funds run into millions. True, they have, of late, shown something of a tendency to recede, but that is merely evidence of a growing disinclination to the practice of thrift on the part of the rising generation, and it is to the societies' credit, that they were paying Old Age Pensions long before the present crude scheme of pensions by the State was elaborated. That same Old Age Pensions scheme, by the way, has every promise of being a very long drain upon public funds in the future, as ministers appear favourably inclined to proposals submitted to them for its extension to a class of the community (those in receipt of pauper relief) who are now debarred.

Insurance Against Consequential Loss.

Reference was made in these columns some months ago to the development by one of the Tariff offices of the business of insurance against loss consequent upon fire, as a supplement to the ordinary fire policy. This development has "caught on" remarkably well. Practically all the Tariff fire offices are now open to issue policies of this kind, and there are sanguine views among insurance officials as to the extent to which this "side-line" may be expanded. The subject formed recently the text of an address given before the Birmingham Insurance Institute, when the varied kinds of consequential loss which follow upon fire in the case of various industries and trades were pointed out. At the same time the speaker expressed the opinion that policies of this kind are now being issued, which do not take sufficiently into account the varied contingencies which may arise, and, therefore, do not give adequate protection. The companies transacting the business, said the speaker (Mr. Gautier de Ste. Croix), appeared to be aiming at uniformity of method, and it did not seem to him possible that business conducted on those lines could lead to a satisfactory result.

The Salvation Army's Fire Insurance Department is to be turned over to a company with a capital of £20,000. Nobody will deny that the Salvation Army has a genius for organization, but that can scarcely extend to the intricate business of fire insurance, and in the interests of the policy-holders, it is to be hoped there will be no amateur management. Up to the present fire insurance by this religious and philanthropic organization has not been a particularly marked success, and the new development is scarcely likely to cause qualms among our great offices.

Problems Confronting Accident Companies.

Companies transacting the personal accident business are being urged to follow the example of the fire offices in forming a tariff association. Attempts have been made in this direction before, but they were not successful, the last failure, in 1898, having been the signal for very sharp rate

cutting, which involved a good many of the offices in heavy losses. Since that time the business has been carried on on a more or less cut throat basis, not so much in the actual lowering of rates as in the multiplication of benefits. It is stated, I see, that some companies include liability for as many as sixty separate diseases in their policies, but in the case of some of the less reputable companies this huge list is largely "bluff." Like the portentous list of diseases which the vendor of patent medicine loves to spread abroad in large type, it is meant to impress and frighten the unsophisticated reader into an exaggerated realization of his own terribly mortal state. As a matter of fact, the benefits obtained through such policies are more illusory than real, since some of the diseases mentioned are notable only by reason of their rarity. Most of the companies doing a personal accident business also transact business under the Employers' Liability Act, and as they have combined to fix the rates for business of this kind, it is hoped, that, by this means, a further step may be effected towards a tariff for personal accident rates.

Another Insurable Interest Case.

The problem of insurable interest is still with us. In its latest form it has cropped up as a County Court case in which a woman paid the premiums for a small policy upon her father's life, in which she had no insurable interest. The father, unfortunately, lived so long that the premiums paid amounted to nearly three times the amount payable under the policy, and the daughter finding that the policy was an illegal one, promptly claimed a refund of the excess of the premiums. The company denied any misrepresentation but, while admitting that the policy was an illegal one, stated their willingness to pay the policy money. They won the day, but the judge expressed the opinion that insurance companies ought to be more careful. The suggestion has been made that in order to get over little difficulties like this, industrial insurance companies should supply their agents with a manual on the law of insurable interest, and its particular application to industrial insurance. An excellent idea, but the average industrial insurance agent in this country is not exactly the type of individual who would easily assimilate legal phraseology, and one can easily imagine the sort of thing which would happen: the insurance agent standing on the door step of a prospective policyholder with an admiring crowd round, while he hastily turned over his manual to see if the proposal was really in order, and the lady of the house expressed her free opinions on the subject of insurance in general, and the agent's company in particular.

International Shipowners' Union.

Shipping interests are a little doubtful of the prospects of success of the movement which has been started on the north-east coast for the formation of an International Shipowners' Union, which would regulate the supply of tonnage so as to give the owners of "tramps" and cargo liners what is commonly known as a "living wage." The promoters are ambitious enough to essay to bring under their banner not only the owners of these classes of shipping in the United Kingdom, but foreign owners from Scandinavia to Spain. It is