pany would take him at a uniform premium of about $14, and give him actual *bona fide* assurance. Why then should he go to a co-operative, which costs him more and gives him no real assurance?

Even the apparent cheapness of the assessment societies lasts only for the first few years. The premiums charged by them must and do increase year by year. The average age increases in spite of all assertions to the contrary. In the "United Brethren," the largest and best Pennsylvania co-operative, it was 44 in 1876, 48 in 1878, 53 in 1880, and 55 in 1882. Then the benefit of the medical selection is wearing out too. After about five years it is supposed to disappear entirely. All these factors combine to cause a rapid increase in the assessments. The following statistics have been compiled by a contemporary from the returns which have been made in Pennsylvania to the State department. They relate to the three leading co-operative societies of the state, and show the net cost for death assessments only, without including anything for expenses.

NET COST PER ANNUM FOR $1,000 ASSURANCE.

Year.	Temperance Mutual Benefit.	Oddfellows Mutual.	United Brethren Mutual Aid.
1874	4.27	6.51	8.24
1875	5.70	9.21	11.11
1876	9.03	12.53	11.15
1877	10.80	13.64	17.00
1878	13.08	15.27	18.51
1879	5.67	18.23	20.30
1880	22.83	27.18	24.28
1881	17.30	18.55	24.54
1882	20.90	19.09	30.60

It will be noticed that the rate in the United Brethren, which is by far the largest, and therefore gives the best average, has increased steadily every year without a single break. The assessments in these companies have now become so heavy that their membership is rapidly decreasing, and they cannot be far from the inevitable final collapse.

The absurdness of the statement so often made that the cost will never exceed about $8.00 per $1,000 per annum in a good assessment company, is shown by the fact that if the average age be now only thirty-five, the members would have to live to an *average* age of one hundred and seventy to cover death losses alone, and to over two hundred to cover expenses also.

We now come to the third division of our subject, the results which follow the working of the assessment system. The most striking of these is the fact that every pure co-operative fails after a few years existence. It could not be otherwise. The history of the societies proves it. The final collapse has too often been hastened by dishonest management, but the radical fault is in the system and not in the management. Even the most honestly and economically conducted do and must fail. When the assessments become rather numerous, new members do not join as readily as before, while many of the younger and healthier lives drop out. The claims naturally then become heavier still. The result is an almost total falling off of new members, and a perfect exodus on the part of the healthy lives who are already members. The assessments then become exorbitant, and there are few left to pay them. The result is a general collapse. It is a well known and certain law that claims will increase with the age of the assured, and that law dooms these assessment societies. To get any return for money paid them, the policyholder must lose no time in making his preparations and die at once. Should he be so unfortunate as to live any length of time, he has no chance. Those who die early after paying but very few premiums make a large profit, while those who live to pay many, lose all. The greatest hardship is however in the case of the man whose health becomes impaired after assuring. He had paid many premiums to provide for the claims of others, and now that he finds his own turn coming, the society fails. He is now unable to pass an examination for a life assurance company, and—he dies, leaving his widow and children penniless. What becomes of the argument then, so often used by co-operative agents, that even though the society may not last long, the party gets assurance at a cheap rate in the meantime? Is that assurance which is of no value when needed? Is that a benefit which induces a man to neglect assuring in a regular company and then leaves his family in poverty? To our mind it is more of a curse than anything else.

The officers of these companies claim that there are English companies precisely similar to the American ones in existence for over one hundred years. This is simply untrue. The English Friendly Societies are not at all of the same nature as these, and do not raise their funds by post mortem assessments.

Another very important consideration with an assurer is his liability to forfeiture even while the society does exist. Nearly all of them insist that all assessments shall be sent to the company direct by post and not to any agent. Notifications of dues also are sent direct to the assured, and the mere posting of the letter by the company is sufficient notice. The policyholder may have his claim forfeited at any moment. He may happen to remove from one place to another or even from one house to another and fail to notify the company, and all is lost. Or he may happen to be from home on a holiday or business trip when the notice comes, and all is lost. With a regular life company he knows exactly how much and when he has to pay, but with an assessment company he knows neither.

But it is quite unnecessary for us to go further. The position may be briefly summed up thus. In a regular life company a man gets genuine life assurance which guarantees him a fixed positive amount at death, at a fixed premium which cannot increase, but which may be largely reduced by profits. In an assessment society he gets a mere counterfeit of life assurance which guarantees him nothing, at a premium which is not fixed, but which will certainly increase steadily until it becomes exorbitant. The first is backed up by capital, reserves and abundant cash assets, and is under the supervision of the Government, while the other is backed up by wind, and is under no supervision of any kind. Which is best?