although they had passed Acts of Parliament for fire protection, those Acts had only been permissive, and they were unquestionably of an inadequate nature. The result was that some ten years ago the fire brigades that existed were independent of one another, and in many districts there were no fire brigades at all. It was left to private enterprise to form the Fire Brigades' Union, to amalgamate the fire brigades together, and to make them one uniform body. There were still many parts of England with no fire brigade at all, and in some districts the brigades were in an inefficient condition. The result was that every year the public were the victims of some terrible conflagration. The terrible fires that took place every year had unquestionably to a large extent been due to the insufficient precautions of those in authority. The only way to create a better and more satisfactory state of things among the brigades was by the firemen of England being recognized as a public body and inspected by State officials. The brigades should also be paid and maintained by the ratepayers. (Cheers.) This could only be effected by an Act of Parliament. He felt he could be of some slight service in offering to them that park where they could drill, and he hoped they had received a hearty welcome. He ventured to hope that in a few years the firemen of England would be recognised as a public body by the Government. (Cheers.)"

The National Fire Brigade Union has been organized ten years, and has had for its president two successive chiefs of the London firemen. The importance of the Union is increasing annually, and at the recent meeting, at Blenheim Park, a conference of the International Bureau was also held, when the Paris Congress of 1900 was discussed. This meeting was presided over by Captain Mignot, president of the French Federation, there being also present Captain Ranter (president of the Royal Belgian Federation), Captain Blakesley (Johannesburg), Captain Marshall (Victoria), Inspector Lunt Henry (Brussels), Major Fox (Salvage Corps, London), Captain Welsh (Ghent), Captain Folker (hon. general secretary National Fire Brigades' Union), and others. The delegates met to consider what questions and papers should be discussed at the Paris Congress, in 1900, and the following were decided: (1) What are the best means to establish brigades in provincial towns and villages not yet protected? (2) To try and induce all towns to establish an independent salvage and ambulance service. (3) The establishment of an international fire brigades' bureau as proposed at the Antwerp and Brussels Congress, 1897; a jury to be selected to decide what prizes should be given for following drills: First, for paid brigades; second, police and part-paid brigades; third, volunteer brigades; and, fourth, private firms' brigades. It was also proposed that Sir Eyre Massey Shaw should be asked if he will accept the office of president of the international jury.

It is to be hoped that, at the proposed tournament in 1900, Canada will be represented by a carefully selected team or teams from the principal cities of the Dominion.

THE CINDERELLA OF INSURANCE.

A POPULAR NIGHT AT THE INSTITUTE OF ACTUARIES.

It is seldom that the *Journal of the Institute of Actuaries*, even among insurance men, may be safely described as popular reading, but the July number has some claim to the appellation. Often has it been said that Mr. Gladstone had the gift of setting figures to music. But there are figures and figures, as well as music and music, and we opine that even the greatest magician might fail to reduce the figures of the actuary to anything, for public use, but a wierd sort of fantasia, and hence if the *Journal* is more often than not caviare to the general, the fact must be attributed to the inherent qualities of mathematics. The first place in the July number of the *Journal* is occupied by a paper entitled "Some Observations on Industrial Assurance," from the pen of Mr. Rea, the actuary of the Pearl Life Assurance Company. In the course of the informing discussion to which Mr. Rea's paper gave rise Mr. T. G. Ackland remarked that in looking through thirty volumes of the *Journal* he had only found one paper relating to the subject of industrial assurance, and that not an essay but a memorandum on topics somewhat foreign to those of Mr. Rea's contribution. In view of this fact Mr. Rea may be said to have broken new ground, and by the success of his paper to have given the subject of industrial assurance a footing in the Institute of Actuaries that it has not held before. It is not long since, as Mr. G. H. Ryan said, industrial assurance was the Cinderella of insurance, looked down upon and scarcely recognized, whereas it was now regarded as the complement of the ordinary system of life insurance. There is a feeling in some quarters that one may embark on the business of industrial assurance with a comparatively light heart. But surely it is a portentous undertaking to establish an industrial company if, as Mr. Manly said, it is not possible to make any profits until the income has reached at least £250,000 a year, because it is necessary to set up a large organization at great expense before business can be done. This will be cold comfort for one or two companies that we could name. Mr. Rea himself remarks in his paper that the business as now transacted by industrial companies differs in almost every important feature from that of the ordinary life offices. The policies are almost invariably taken out as a provision against funeral expenses, and the amounts assured are very small. The benefit per policy is, indeed, known to vary in different places with the local cost of funerals, but the average present benefit per policy approximates to £9. The weekly system of collections appears to be absolutely necessary, for all attempts to simplify the labour have been unsuccessful, and this essential feature of industrial assurance remains the one cause of the high rate of expense attending the business. But the assured, Mr. Rea reminds us, have the matter in their