

separate state departments, there is some small gleam of hope in the circumstance that the National Convention of Insurance Commissioners are themselves taking some steps towards eradicating abuses and introducing more satisfactory methods of examination. Indeed, a resolution passed by a special committee of the organization last week provides for joint examinations by properly equipped departments, whenever in the judgment of the committee such examinations are necessary, and also for the interchange between the various departments of information as to the results of the examinations thus made. As The Standard of Boston points out, while the committee has no power to enforce this action upon any commissioner, it is in a position to make a powerful appeal to public opinion in the case of any further attempt to treat companies unfairly, so that a much-needed reform is in a fair way of being brought about.



COMPULSORY INSURANCE.

Much is heard of the "State socialism" of Germany, more especially as manifested in its scheme of compulsory insurance for workingmen. Whatever may be argued for or against the principle of government paternalism in such matters (and in a country circumstanced as is Canada the weight of argument seems *contra*) this much may be said for Germany's plan as compared with the British old age pension scheme: that by requiring contributions from the prospective pensioner during his working years, it conserves self-respect and thrift as Britain's purely eleemosynary plan must fail of doing.

Three weeks ago, in his Speech from the Throne, the Kaiser outlined to the Reichstag a plan for further extending sick benefit insurance among the working classes so as to cover certain industrial groups not heretofore benefited. It will be of interest to glance briefly at the scope of Germany's "State socialism" in the matter of insurance thus far.

As outlined by Rudolph Cronau in December McClure's, the three branches of insurance provided for are: first, a compulsory insurance against sickness; second, a compulsory insurance against accidents; third, a compulsory insurance against invalidity and old age.

We are told that to the funds of the first class, the *Krankenkassen*, of which at present 23,214 are in existence, all laborers earning less than two thousand marks a year must pay two-thirds and the employer one-third of the weekly premiums. In case of sickness, the insured person receives half the amount of his wages for twenty-six weeks. Doctors, hospitals, and medicines are free. At present about thirteen to fourteen million laborers

are in this way protected. Up to the end of 1907 more than 2,997,000,000 marks had been paid out to sick laborers. Besides, seven to eight million marks are paid every year to poor mothers, who are supported for several weeks before and after confinement. To prevent sickness, especially tuberculosis, the institution supports numbers of sanatoriums and recreation homes, where thousands of people who would perish otherwise regain health.

The writer in McClure's points out that the insurance fees against accident must be paid entirely by the employers. In case of an accident, it is not the employer in whose factory it happened who is held responsible, but the whole group of employers of the same branch. Every group is compelled to establish an insurance company, of which, in 1907, 114 were in existence. About twenty to twenty-one million laborers are thus protected by 150,000 employers. An injured laborer receives, during the time of his disability, two-thirds of his wages, also free medical treatment. In case of his death, the family receives at once fifteen per cent. of his annual wages and an annual support of sixty per cent. Up to the end of 1907, 1,486,000,000 marks in all had been paid out.

The premiums for the insurance against invalidity and old age are paid half by the employees and half by the employer. Support is given to invalids without regard to age, and to persons above seventy years; also to the widows and orphans of insured persons. To every lawful pension the Government contributes fifty marks. At present about fourteen million persons are protected by this insurance. And 1,501,000,000 marks had been paid out up to the end of 1907.

In all, 5,984,000,000 marks have been distributed among needy people by these three branches of insurance. This enormous amount would be increased by several hundred million marks, if we considered the similar institutions that protect the miners of Germany. The results of these forms of compulsory insurance have induced the Government to now prepare a special insurance for widows and orphans. Herr Cronau points out that the management of these insurance companies lies entirely in the hands of the working classes and the employers.

CANADIAN FIRE UNDERWRITERS' ASSOCIATION.

The usual general meeting of the C. F. U. A. was held in Montreal on the 15th, Mr. R. McD. Paterson, president in the chair. A good deal of routine business connected with interests of the association was discussed. The following Western representatives were present: J. B. Laidlaw (Norwich Union), H. M. Blackburn (Sun), Peter McCallum (Hartford), T. D. Richardson (New York Underwriters), Alfred Wright (London & Lancashire Fire), T. C. Hall (General), W. B. Meikle (Western), and F. C. Moore (German American).