## RETAINING INDUSTRIAL AGENTS.

The results of an investigation into the circumstances of the "finaled accounts" of its industrial agents have been published in pamphlet form by the Metropolitan Life. It is pointed out that since the commencement of industrial life insurance in England, more than half a century ago, the problem of retention of agents has been a chief feature of managerial study and experiment. In the United States, no appreciable progress was made in its solution until ten years ago. Since then, advance has been made, which seems to point to administrative methods by which waste from this source may be minimised. But in the last analysis, the judgment and skill of the district superintendent in the training of agency candidates is the controlling factor looking to full success.

A series of charts are given, showing the experience of "finaled accounts" in recent years, and an analysis of these accounts by the nationality, race, marital condition, etc, of the agents concerned. One conclusion which may be drawn from this analysis is that those are the most successful industrial agents who are closest in viewpoint to the working-class patrons of this system of insurance and are accordingly most sympathetic with their interests and ideas. The report remarks:—

"We find that skilled mechanics make better agents than office clerks. For two reasons there has always been an inclination to favor a candidate whose previous occupation gave promise of clerical efficiency; first, on the assumption that clerical work requires a higher degree of intelligence; and, second, that a candidate with clerical experience requires less instruction and oversight in clerical duties. So, as a class, clerks have been subjected to less searching scrutiny than mechanics, and have been more readily accepted, with the result that more poor ones than good ones have been appointed, and more finals have resulted. The opposite has been the case with mechanics, and with the better results as shown.

"Like examples might be added, but without further avail as evidence tending to the conclusion. This seems certain: That in the securing and sifting of candidates for agencies in industrial insurance the most favorable results are achieved when the attitude of the selecting authority and the scheme of selection operate in favor of the company; when the measuring rod as applied to the candidate's qualifications is laid on carefully, inflexibly; when references are painstakingly investigated; when all qualifications are carefully considered, with the applicant's personality in the balance; when personal influence is excluded, and when sympathy with the applicant's desire for employment is disregarded; in short, where cool-headed business selection alone determines the issue; then, and only in such case can losses through finaled accounts be kept within bounds."

## THE KNIGHTS OF DISHONOR.

The experiences of one of the members of the Knights and Ladies of Honor, started an investigation of the noble Order, and it was found to be insolvent. The member referred to, a man eighty years old, had been paying assessments for nearly forty years. He started at $1.80 per month for a $1,000 certificate. In May, 1916, he was called on to pay $18.40, which is $220.80 a year. The old man could not pay the May assessment of $18.40. Not counting interest, he had already paid in forty years for a $1,000 certificate, which is worthless, no less than $1,338.80! He has no equity in the noble Order now, and will lose every cent he has paid in four decades!—*Insurance Index.*