

feeling in South Australia, that the Bill—at least in its crude form—ought not to be allowed to pass into law. The *South Australian Register* characterizes the proposal as “a scheme well calculated to hurry on national insolvency.”

The Bill first of all provides for the establishment of a State insurance office, to be called the State Fire Insurance Office of South Australia, to be managed by a board of three trustees and a commissioner nominated by them. Statutory insurance is only to be applied by proclamation after a petition for such proclamation from (a) the local authority (b) at least 50 ratepayers, or (c) the commissioner. This petition must be published, and a counter petition praying for a poll may be lodged. If no counter petition is presented, or if on a poll there is not a majority against the scheme, it is to be put in force. This does not look like actual compulsion; but the Bill further provides that when the scheme has been applied to Adelaide, and to one-half in number of the other districts it may then be compulsorily applied to any other part of South Australia. The statutory insurance is to be nominally effected in the name of the owner of the property, but all interested in the property are to benefit to the extent of their various interests. All such persons are to be liable, jointly and severally for the premium. In other words to save the officials any trouble, they are empowered to exact the full premium from any of the parties interested, whom they may choose to pounce upon, leaving him to recover the proper proportions from the other parties as best he can. Any profits arising are intended to be applied (a) to the reduction of premiums, (b) in augmenting the general revenue, and (c) in payments to local authorities in proportion to the excess of local premiums over losses. In other words, the insured not only pays the actual premium, but an extra contribution to the general revenue.

### THE ACCIDENT COMPANIES AND CYCLISTS.

The minds of the riding section of the public appear to be a good deal exercised at the intention of the managers of the accident insurance offices to consider the serious drain upon their funds from policyholders who are engaged in cycling. That this survey of the office position may lead to increased rating there is no manner of doubt, and it is clear from any perusal of a daily paper that the risk to the offices is something more than visionary when a special column is devoted in the public journals to “cycle accidents.” Of course, the position to the offices is no new one, and it comes up somewhat on the same lines as the “football scare,” of which much was heard some year or two since. There is no doubt about it whatever, and

the position will appeal to any reasonable man, that there should be in the accident prospectus a scale of rating much on the same lines as those we find in an ordinary fire tariff. Certain contingencies of risk carry an additional rate, and if this were adopted something would be done to equalise the rates. Of course this would entail an increased work on the offices for which someone would have to pay, but it seems manifestly unequal to allow a cycling man or woman of limited experience to come in on the same basis as a man who offers only the ordinary everyday personal risk. The majority of the accidents to cyclists do not come under the notice of the offices, and the recklessness of the riders interests them but slightly. Men and women—the latter especially—who do not as a rule cross a crowded thoroughfare without the aid of a policeman, seem to throw discretion to the winds when they mount a cycle, and the class may be seen any date careering wildly about busy streets, absolutely courting death and disaster. The paying rate for these people would be hard to assess, and these are the people who are forcing the hands of the accident managers, to the detriment of the sober and experienced riders.—*The Citizen.*

### SEPTEMBER FIRE LOSS.

To go a little way into the past one discovers that the September fire losses in the United States and Canada were not all that insurance men might wish for. The total amount reached \$14,200,000, or over \$4,800,000 more than September of last year, and \$6,000,000 more than in the same month two years ago. There were some large fires last month, the New Westminster conflagration being the most serious. There were 151 fires that involved greater losses than \$10,000 each, and 24 that exceeded \$100,000. We are now in a quarter of the year when increased losses must be looked for. The total losses in the United States and Canada for the first nine months of 1896-7-8 were as follows:

	1896.	1897.	1898.
January...	\$11,040,000	\$12,049,700	\$9,472,500
February....	9,730,100	8,676,750	12,629,300
March.....	14,839,600	10,502,950	7,645,200
April .....	12,010,600	10,833,000	8,211,000
May.....	10,618,000	10,193,600	11,072,200
June.....	5,721,250	5,684,450	9,206,900
July.....	9,033,250	6,626,300	8,929,750
August.....	8,895,250	6,454,950	7,793,500
September...	8,200,650	9,392,000	14,203,650
Total....	\$90,088,790	\$80,413,700	\$89,164,000

This is not a very encouraging state of affairs for new companies just starting business or contemplating a start, especially for the smaller concerns. During the past twenty years a large amount of capital has been thrown away, or worse than thrown away, in unsuccessful fire insurance ventures.