the well-established commercial undertakings in the country are converted into limited companies. Managers and directors of such concerns who might, prior to their taking in the public as partners, have been prepared occasionally to take trade risks above the average, in the hope of personal reward arising therefrom, become less anxious to accept such a responsibility. They know that if a venture turns out badly their reputation will suffer gravely, and that from their point of view it is better to pursue the hum-drum course, and see a gradually declining trade, than run any risk of exposing their co-partners to severe loss and themselves to the vituperation of disappointed shareholders or the sometimes spiteful attacks of an anonymous press. Therefore, even in perfectly sound undertakings, the spirit of commercial enterprise tends to be choked; and the original object of the Companies Act, viz., the encouragement of industrial undertakings such as individuals or small groups could not easily carry on, is now being defeated by the operation of those very Acts themselves.

This we regard as the grave evil. The spirit of adventure has been directed into the barren channel of mere speculation of a stock-jobbing nature, where it can result in little fruit, instead of pursuing the more fertile and nationally beneficial course of the adventurous investment. As a matter of fact, it is in the intelligent foresight of public needs, in the acceptance of fair commercial hazards, in enterprise and activity in spheres which are new, either geographically or in the sense of creating new wants, that the hope of English commerce must lie. But such hazards imply the chance of failure; and to-day public opinion, dealing out as it does a wild undiscriminating justice, and blind to all but the fact of failure or success, deters the honest man of solid judgment and enterprise, who has a reputation which he values, from embarking upon any venturesome hazard with the money of shareholders, or from accepting the responsibility of a director in any company of which the future is problematical. Thus it is that capital abstains from adventurous investments, that the soundest