

debt, and taxes any value except for the purposes of mere curiosity. Another misuse of the word average is when it is applied to the weather, or temperature. We have had zero weather for about half of this month, to get the so-called "average" of 18 above zero for the whole month. As ordinarily calculated, it will require a temperature of about 36 above zero to be maintained for over two weeks. As a mere arithmetical calculation this would give the so-called average of February, which is 18 degrees, but to speak of the temperature this month, with such conditions prevailing, as having averaged 18 above zero would be very misleading, as it would give no indication of there having been extreme cold for half the month, and an unusually high temperature for the other half. In the official returns of criminal statistics, the word "average" is used in a very faulty manner, because the classification and treatment of offenders differ very widely in different localities. In some places all offenders are dealt with summarily, or with rare exceptions, in others the same offenders would be tried by jury, yet the official returns compare the number of offenders dealt with summarily in the former class of places with those dealt with in the same way in the latter class. Clearly then, averages based upon statistics compiled on two such different systems are worthless for comparative purposes. A table is before us which gives the average wages of those employed in a certain class of factories in Canada as \$7.50 per week. This average is arrived at by adding together the weekly wages paid to five classes of operatives which aggregate \$37.50. Such an average has no meaning. To strike an average of the wages earned in a factory it would be necessary to state how many earn wages at each rate; from this, we could ascertain their aggregate weekly earnings, and if this were divided by the total number of those employed, we should get a correct average, which is not learnt by adding the earnings per head in each class of operatives by the number of classes into which they are divided. Suppose, for instance, in an office there are three classes of clerks in all numbering 15, one class with \$2,000 a year, one class with \$1,000, and a third class with \$600 a year, would it be true to say that the average earnings of those officials was \$1,200 a year, when there was only one clerk at \$2,000, one only at a \$1,000, and 13 at \$600, such alleged average being arrived at by dividing the sum of \$2,000, \$1,000, and \$600, by three, which yields \$1,200. The correct average would be struck by adding their total yearly earnings, which is, \$10,800, by their total number, 15, which yields only \$720. Yet from data so crudely dealt with, and from statistics which have no practical connection, we are constantly finding averages arrived at from which the most serious conclusions are drawn in regard to the public debt, the incidence of taxation, the rate of wages, the incomes of the people and other matters upon which statistics throw great light when intelligently handled, but throw great obscurity and falsity when they

are used without scientific methods. All the statistical conditions which may affect the calculation must be present to make an average accurate arithmetically, and all those conditions must have a practical relation to render an average intelligent and instructive.

BRITISH INTEREST IN CANADIAN SECURITIES.

Mr. Charles R. Hosmer Interviewed.

After a somewhat protracted absence in Europe, Mr. Hosmer returned to Montreal on Sunday last. Alert, quick, watchful, and with an air of self-confidence possibly begotten of his knowledge that a great capacity for work almost invariably ensures success in life, Mr. Charles R. Hosmer is an interesting subject for an "interviewer." A representative of THE CHRONICLE found the active manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's telegraph system at his office on Tuesday last, looking well and cheerful, and showing no sign of fatigue after his stormy mid-winter voyage across the Atlantic. Questioned as to the sad circumstance which occasioned his return to Paris, Mr. Hosmer stated that his daughter was now quite convalescent.

The well-known Montrealer, being asked as to the condition of business in London, said that he found bankers and brokers in the great city much interested in American and Canadian securities, but, as usual, disinclined to express faith in the permanency of the improvement shown in railway, industrial and mining enterprise on this side of the Atlantic. However, Mr. Hosmer, who is evidently a firm believer in the future of the United States, and well fitted to give a bright forecast of the destiny of the Dominion of Canada, was able to assure timid enquirers after Atchison, C. P. R., mining and other stocks, that experience, improved management, and the growth of a country rapidly filling with a busy, industrious population has been the means of giving strength and solidity to many enterprises in which much money has been invested.

Altogether, from Mr. Hosmer's rapid outline of his meetings with financiers and others in London, we gathered the impression that nowhere could be found a much better exponent of the resources and prospects of this Western world, or any one better qualified to sweep away erroneous impressions of our country and its business, than the self-reliant and hopeful manager of the great Canadian Pacific Railway Company's Telegraph System. The true and amiable philosophy of optimism apparently has a stout adherent in this energetic citizen of Montreal, to whom his many friends have given a warm welcome home.

Within the past few days, Mr. Hosmer has accepted an invitation to become a director of the Merchants' Bank of Canada.