317 were burned, or 53.([illegible] cent. This percentage is higher than obtains generally, because most of our reports originated in the newspapers, and naturally it is chiefly the severe strokes that are thus reported. Amongst that 599 there were only 18 rodded buildings, and of these only three were burned, which is one in six or 16.6 per cent., as against 53.6. Hence we concluded that an unrodded building if struck is more than three times as likely to be burned as a rodded one. This is the sum total of the results of our first ten years' study of this subject. As there seemed to be no object in pursuing this phase further, the original line of investigation was discontinued.

On the three rodded buildings that were burned the rods were reported in good repair, but whether the rodding was correctly done we had no means of determining.

Do Lightning Rods Prevent Strokes?

But as early as 1906 we had begun to enquire whether lightning rods hadn't a greater function to perform than save buildings that are struck. We had begun to ask ourselves whether lightning rods do not actually prevent many buildings from being struck! At first thought this looks preposterous, but seemingly preposterous things sometimes turn out real and contain great truths.

But how could we determine whether rods prevent buildings from being struck? If 1,000 rodded buildings escaped damage during a storm, how could we ascertain whether some of them would have been damaged if not rodded? We knew that amongst 599 buildings that were struck there were only 18 rodded ones, which is just 3 per cent. If we knew what percentage of farm buildings in Ontario were rodded that would settle the question. If rods neither prevent nor induce strokes then the percentage of rodded buildings amongst those struck should be just the same as the percentage of rodded buildings in Ontario. If the rods cause strokes then proportionally more rodded ones would be struck than unrodded, but if they prevent strokes, then proportionally less.

Clues That Failed.

To determine what percentage of Ontario buildings are rodded we first endeavored to have the township assessors make a record regarding the buildings on each farm and to have them give a return showing the result. In this we failed. We approached the inspector of insurance with a view to having him make a regulation requiring fire insurance companies to report in every application whether the buildings insured were rodded or not. Again we were disappointed. We thought of endeavouring to have the census enumerators ascertain the number of rodded and unrodded buildings, but this seemed impracticable. We wrote every insurance company doing business in Ontario, about one hundred and forty in all, but they were unable to tell us whether the buildings in their risks were rodded or not.

However, writing the insurance companies was the beginning of the solution. It drew their attention to our work. Early in 1912 the writer accepted an invitation to address the Mutual Fire Underwriters' Association on the subject of Lightning Rods. After dealing with the subject from a scientific standpoint and giving the result already noted of our ten years' investigations along the practical side, the writer laid before the members of the Association the important question as to whether rods actually prevent strokes from occurring, and asked their co-operation in answering it.