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R. WILSON SMITH
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Insurance "Sink Holes."

The editor of the insurance department in the New York Commercial Bulletin has exposed what he calls "some sink holes," down which the companies' money has been running in the last five years. The net loss in each of the following States in years 1896 to 1900 were: Arkansas, \$66,255; Kentucky, \$105,726; Missouri, \$151,059; North Dakota, \$242,552; Ohio, \$118,763; Pennsylvania, \$1,960,590; Tennessee, \$1,270,875, making a total net loss of \$3,915,811.

Competition and the Panama Canal Question.

The power of competition has ever been one of the forces, if not the supreme influence in the sphere of commerce, as it has also in diplomacy and in international relations. Many wars attributed to dynastic and political causes, if more closely studied, would prove to have had their origin in trade competition which gave rise to the dynastic and political quarrels that resulted in war. Professor Stubbs, late Bishop of Oxford, said "Wars in old times were for rights; in modern times they are for interests." This general principle is illustrated by the conflicts which for over a century made Europe resound with the clash of arms up to the close of the Napoleonic wars. Napoleon's ambition was to destroy the commercial power of England. He sneered at British devotion to trade, just as the fox disparaged the grapes it coveted, but could not reach. Competition in tariffs set in motion the hugest and most aggressive military expedition on record. Competition is just now showing its power over international affairs by the attitude which is being assumed by leading American journals in regard to the projected canal across the Isthmus of Panama. This enterprise was undertaken "hotfoot" by the States, the selected route being across Nicaragua

from Greytown on the east coast to Brito on the Pacific. The difficulties of a treaty and political character in that scheme were sought to be removed by the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. The Nicaragua canal could not have been constructed as first proposed, that is, as a strictly American channel, as practically a section of the United States and under the absolute control and protection of that country, without the assent of Great Britain and other European powers whose treaty rights, such an American canal would have been violated, and whose commercial interests it would have endangered. The Senate of the United States refused to sanction the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, under which the canal would have been neutralized and practically placed under the protection of England as well as the States. A movement has since been initiated to revive the original Panama Canal, upon which most costly work was done under Lesseps, which was abandoned. Were this completed, it would be so formidable a competitor of the one by the Nicaragua route as to render that enterprise of little value, and hopeless from a revenue earning standpoint. The Panama channel is shorter by a day and a half, its navigation would be far easier, its terminal, and its harbours are safer and more commodious than those proposed to be constructed at the mouths of the Nicaragua canal. The spectre of competition is showing on the horizon, alarming the American people by the prospect of their pet scheme being financially killed by a rival. The right of a foreign power or foreign capitalists to build the Panama canal cannot now be disputed by the States, so the wisest course for the Washington government would be to formally abandon the Nicaragua project and give aid to the revived movement for connecting the Atlantic and Pacific by the route selected by the distinguished but unfortunate French engineer, Dr. Lesseps.