

adian railways must not own more than so many thousands of cars during the same year? The propositions are absurd, yet we venture to say that they are on all-fours with the enactment of legislation designed to prevent life companies doing what they have been designed to do, merely because they have been unusually successful in doing it.

Fortunately in Canada hitherto, we have been spared legislation of this sort. But there may possibly be the threat of it in the future. Some of our Canadian life companies are attaining now a respectable size and their growth in the immediate future is likely to be very rapid. That they will be as ably and effectively managed when they have twice or three times the present amount of their assets, as they are now, we have no manner of doubt, and they should be allowed to grow in their own way and according to the ideas of their management. The State has no right to stunt the growth arbitrarily.

WHERE STATISTICS PROVE TOO MUCH.

"O, liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name," so exclaimed the unhappy Madame Roland. May not the same reproach be often made of the use of statistics even by eminent men? Even a man of such scientific renown as Professor Karl Pearson can apparently mistake statistical quick-sands for solid earth. Professor Pearson, with some elaboration of argument and statistics, has drawn the conclusion, based on a study of 381 patients in the Crossley Sanatorium, that there is a greater liability to tuberculosis among early born children than among children of the same parents born later, also that families containing tuberculous members are more numerous than the families of the rest of the population. He also contends, that insane persons and criminals are drawn from families larger than the average. Mr. T. B. Macaulay, the distinguished actuary, has recently examined the statistics from which these conclusions are drawn and he declares that a fallacy runs through almost all of them which utterly destroys their value, and from statistics so prepared almost anything can be proved. With caustic simplicity, Mr. Macaulay points out that such statistics only prove that children and babies are not, as a rule, old enough to develop consumption or to be sentenced to penitentiaries—that is all. If we were to select a group of men weighing fourteen stone, he observes, the percentages of early born would be greater than of later born, which would not prove that early born children develop into heavier men than the later born, but merely that boys and babies rarely weigh fourteen stone. We opine that a barber might conclude on good *prima facie* evidence that the elder sons of a family grow stronger beards than the younger ones. But he would probably change his opinion if he waited for ten years before arranging his statistics. In regard to the claim that consumptives, insane persons and criminals come from families larger than the average families, Mr. Macaulay remarks that the statistics from which the conclusion is drawn are not based on marriages or families, but on children, which proves nothing. A family of ten children has ten times as great a chance

of producing a consumptive or a criminal as a family of only one child has. Hence to compare an average so found with the average size of family in the total population is to compare entirely different things. It would seem as if the structure which Professor Pearson has reared has collapsed as completely as did the Campanile at Venice some ten years ago. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*—The Policyholder, Manchester.

WESTERN CANADA FIRE UNDERWRITERS' ASSOCIATION.

At a recent meeting of the Western Canada Fire Underwriters' Association, the following action was taken in regard to contingent commissions:—

It was moved by the Aetna and seconded by the Canadian Fire that the constitution be amended as follows: Add after clause 5 of article 10, page 12, of constitution the following:

"It is provided, however, that in towns and cities of 2,500 population or over, with waterworks protection and which towns and cities shall have been approved and the names thereof bulletined by the provincial committee, an agent or chief representative, as an alternative to the above, may be paid a commission of 10 per cent. flat with 15 per cent. on profits annually. In calculating profits, losses and adjustment charges and a minimum of 30 per cent. to cover general expenses must be deducted from the premiums. The premiums shall mean the gross premiums of the agency, less refunds and cancellations. All compensation agreements involving the contingent plan shall be made for a period of not less than one year and upon the completion of any such agreement the company so doing shall immediately notify the secretary of the association to that effect, and the secretary shall similarly notify the other companies, if any, in the agency."

The motion was carried. There were 56 ayes, as follows:

Ayes—Acadia, American Central, Aetna, American Fire, Alliance, Atlas, British America, British Crown, British and Canadian Underwriters, Caledonian, Calumet, Canada National, Canada West, Canadian Fire, Delaware, Employers' Liability, Firemen's, General Accident, German-American, Germania, Guardian, Hartford, Home, Insurance Company of North America, Insurance Company of State of Pennsylvania, Liverpool and London and Globe, London Assurance, London and Lancashire, L'Union, Manitoba, Mercantile, Midwest, National, Niagara, North British & Mercantile, North Empire, North West Fire, Northwestern National, Northern, Norwich Union, Protector Underwriters, Pacific Coast, Phoenix of Hartford, Phoenix of London, Providence-Washington, Quebec, Rochester German, Royal Exchange, Scottish Union, Sovereign, St. Paul F. & M., Sun, Union, Western, Western Union, Yorkshire.

There were 8 nays as follows:

Nays: Commercial Union, Law Union & Rock, Liverpool Victoria, New York Underwriters, Occidental, Palatine, Queen, Royal.

Mr. Russell Blackburn, of Ottawa, has been elected a director of the Bank of Ottawa to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. H. F. McLachlin, of Arnprior.