

SAFEGUARDING INVESTED CAPITAL. 33

Innumerable investments were then, and are now, on offer; but of these only a limited number proved thoroughly suitable and remunerative, and, naturally enough, such highly desirable investments were firmly held, and not procurable on favourable terms or in sufficient quantities. Moreover, it became apparent that by concentrating the combined holdings of customers in a limited number of very desirable securities, the Registry's *clientèle* could command a power that could be wielded most advantageously in their own interests.

So long as the clients' capital was diffused over a large number of securities, neither the Registry nor the clients could exercise any real control over the management of the undertakings in whose securities they were interested. Facilities for obtaining special and detailed information from the managers of such concerns could not be insisted upon. Whenever it was deemed desirable to add to the data afforded by the reports and balance-sheets officially published, the additional information was difficult to obtain, because the combined holding of the Registry's customers was not large enough to command attention. Where bearer securities were concerned it was impossible to ascertain whether the stock was so well held and dispersed among private investors that no danger could arise through large quantities of it being suddenly offered for sale, unduly depressing the selling price.

In some instances, again, it was found that the officially published reports and balance-sheets concealed