relevant evidence... In some cases the degree of credibility can be inferred from mathematical probability, in others it cannot; but even when it can it is important to remember that it is a different concept. Though "degree of credibility" is a wider and vaguer conception than mathematical probability, it is not purely subjective... it is objective in the sense that it is the degree of credence that a rational man will give... In relation to any proposition about which there is evidence, however inadequate, there is a corresponding degree of credibility, which is the same as the degree of credence given by a man who is rational." For an illustration of the difference between a prognosis with a high degree of credibility and an accidentally accurate prophecy, let us contrast two forecasts concerning the first and the second world war. Frederick Engels ingeniously combined decisive trends in interrelated systems when, a generation before the outbreak of World War I, he predicted prolonged two-front trench warfare and a stalemate in the West as well as a Russian defeat and revolution in the East. On the other hand, H.G. Wells, who in 1933 prophesized the outbreak of World War II with only a few months margin of error and quite correctly as an outgrowth of a German-Polish conflict about the Free City of Danzig, may have stepped beyond the limits of more or less reliable forecasting into the twilight of pure chance.

Mathematical probability is the tool used für the understanding of that segment of future social reality which, in its structure, resembles the world of nature. Wherever actions and relationships of relatively large numbers of analogous persons or groups are under investigation which are recurrent and unchanging over a certain period of time, the quantitative method typical of the exact sciences can be applied and the probability of future occurrences can be numerically determined. According to Professor Phelps, "predictions improve in accuracy when they are based upon trend-lines and probable error and reach their highest validity in the statistics of the insurance actuary". More recently, trend predictions have been ventured with increasing accuracy in the fields of population movement and business fluctuation, and they are making headway in education, psychology, and criminology. With the help of statistics, changes in public opinion and election results are now forecast regularly[3]. In many instances, such mass phenomena can be correctly predicted by statistical means though the future behavior of the individual component of the mass may be completely unpredictable.

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3) The reader who has been discouraged by the failure of the public opinion "pollsters" to predict Truman's election should consult Louis Bean's *How to Predict Elections* (Knopf, New York 1948).