

serve a distinct decrease in the ordinary discounts and a corresponding increase in call and time loans on stocks and bonds. A larger sum is also invested in Canadian and other stocks, and there appears to be a larger proportion of the bank's money used in the States. The overdue debts are very small and the aggregate of real estate held or of mortgages thereon has been reduced. The result of the year's business has been a net profit of \$514,431, to be added to the \$37,974 brought forward from last year. After paying dividend of seven per cent. and giving \$10,000 to the retiring president, \$100,000 was added to Rest account and \$22,406 carried forward. We must regard these as very encouraging results, in a generally unsatisfactory year for bankers; and the 321 officers in the 44 branches of the Commerce may well be congratulated on their work.

The thirty-fifth annual meeting of the Bank of Toronto was signalized by the somewhat unusual feature of an address from the president on the past and present condition of the bank, and on the general commercial situation. It was given in the brief, plain, common-sense style which characterizes that gentleman. He touched upon the Baring matter, the McKinley Tariff, the cereal crops, timber and lumber, the cheese industry, cattle export, and the condition of manufactures. Taking a backward glance at the career of the Bank of Toronto, Mr. Gooderham makes some interesting comparisons. For example, the bank's circulation in 1861 was only \$571,674; in 1891 it is \$1,394,000 at date, while earlier in the fiscal year it reached \$1,800,000. Again, the deposits were in 1861 only \$478,000; in 1871 they were \$2,328,000; in 1881, \$3,162,000; and in the present year they have reached \$7,197,000. Similarly the loans and discounts were \$1,407,000 in 1861; they were deemed to have grown very fast when they reached \$4,613,000 in ten years afterwards, and approached \$6,000,000 in 1881. But now they are more than ten millions of dollars (\$10,422,118), an increase of 75 per cent. in ten years. The president is justified in his conclusion that the bank has the confidence of the public. We observe with interest that Mr. John Leys, of Rice Lewis & Son, limited, has been chosen a director in the room of the late Mr. Wadsworth.

The last year of the Imperial Bank of Canada has been a very successful one. The transactions of that institution now reach considerable figures: the total liabilities to the public amounting to \$8,019,000, while those to shareholders are \$2,508,000. To the sum of \$48,000, brought forward from last year, was added profits for the last twelve months, \$222,828. Out of this sum was paid \$138,000, being dividend of 8 and bonus of 1 per cent., while \$8,000 was written off 'bank premises' account. The Rest was increased by \$50,000 from earnings, and by \$28,340 premiums received on new capital stock; it now stands at \$778,340, equal, at the date of the report, to 50 per cent. upon the paid-up capital. Authority having been given two years ago to allot \$500,000 new stock, the allotment was begun in May last, and by the end of the month \$56,710 had been taken up. Present

shareholders have till August 18th to accept their allotments. The condition of the bank's assets shown in the report indicates an active and prosperous business. Branches of the bank have been opened during the year at Rat Portage, Ont., and at Prince Albert, Sask. Its office at Brandon having been found unsuitable, a desirable lot adjoining the new post-office has been purchased for new premises. The Bank of Montreal, the Bank of British Columbia, the Bank of Nova Scotia and the Union Bank of Halifax are the redemption agents of the bank, where the bank itself is not represented.

The Bank of Hamilton has had another good year. Its business appears to be growing steadily, and its earnings have, year by year, been very satisfactory. Premiums on new stock at 45 per cent. enabled the addition of \$93,083 to be made to Rest, leaving a balance to be carried forward. Power having been taken, two years ago, for an increase of capital stock, an issue during the past twelve months sufficed to make the paid up capital \$1,206,850. The Reserve Fund has been made up to \$600,000. Then there is an addition of half a million to the deposits, the total liabilities to shareholders and the public amounting to something over \$7,000,000. With resources thus increased fair earnings were to be expected. The net profits of last year's business were \$145,125, and the amount brought forward had been \$10,317, making together \$155,442, out of which, after paying eight per cent. dividend, there was a sum of \$56,917 carried to Rest account. The new building of the bank shows its handsome proportions on Gore of King street, and will soon be ready for occupancy. A branch of the bank is to be opened on the corner of James and Barton streets.

A carefully restricted business appears from the statement of the Ontario Bank for the year just ended. While ordinary discounts appear at a lower figure, and such items as real estate, mortgages or past due debts show somewhat larger than before, there is on the other hand a decided increase in cash assets of the nature of call loans and Government or other securities. The net profits of the twelve months are well up to the average of recent years. There is an increase in deposits not bearing interest, while the interest-bearing deposits are slightly reduced. After paying seven per cent. dividend an addition of \$30,000 has been made to the Rest and the sum of \$22,886 is carried forward at debit of Profit and Loss. It is apparent that some progress has been made in overcoming the unpleasant features of the previous twelve months, and the writing off done a year ago appears to be sufficient. The report mentions the establishment of an office of the bank at Sudbury.

A gratifying statement was presented to the shareholders of the Standard Bank of Canada. Circulation has been active; deposits show an increase to \$4,013,000, and while current discounts and advances are slightly reduced, there is a decided increase in loans at call or on short date, and in securities held. The earnings for the year were good; dividend last half was paid at

the rate of eight per cent. per annum, instead of the usual seven, and yet there was \$40,000 added to the Rest account, which makes that fund 50 per cent. of the capital. This state of things is the result of careful management, and justifies the painstaking cashier in taking a trans-Atlantic holiday.

THE ARGENTINE INVESTMENTS OF THE BARINGS.

The Buenos Ayres correspondent of the *New York World* devotes nine columns to a statement which professes to throw a flood of light on the investments of the Barings in Argentine. According to this story the firm became the victims of a smooth-tongued American, Charles H. Sanford, who about twenty-five years ago went to South America as a vendor of Florida waters and Bristol's pills, and who afterwards connected himself with an old American house, in which his own name stood with a Co. He had an unbalanced head, full of wild schemes, and he lost a great deal of his partner's money. He afterwards blossomed into a broker on the Bolsa [or Bourse] of Buenos Ayres. Then he went to London and was introduced to Lord Revelstoke of the House of Barings, on whom he appears to have exercised great influence, and through these two the House of Barings was led into its strange miscellaneous investments in Argentine.

The story of the way in which the Barings became possessed of the Buenos Ayres water works requires us to believe several things to which it is difficult to give credit: that they bid for the contract to finish the works, when they had reached a certain stage under Government control, under the name of S. B. Hale & Co., and that they advanced something like \$3,000,000 to be used in "preliminaries," in other words, bribes, as a means of getting the contract, is difficult to believe. The Barings, it seems, bought the water works of that city for \$21,000,000, payable in three instalments, two of which have been paid. In addition to this, there was \$3,000,000 or so paid in alleged bribes. The correspondent undertakes to tell us exactly how much the President of the Republic got for his share, how much higher the rapacity of the Minister of the Interior was rated, and so on through the whole chapter of alleged knavery. In return for the purchase money and other payments, the Barings were to get interest on gold on 36,000,000 dollars, to be levied by a compulsory water rate, 84,000 tenements being each required by law to pay so much per month. Is a tenement a house, or does a house contain as many tenements as families? This question came up afterwards, like a ghost, to perplex the purchasers. It is admitted that the original rate for water must be reduced. The third instalment of the purchase money, not due, has to be paid; but there is a proposal to re-transfer the water-works to the Government; on the cost of completing the plant engineering opinions differ widely. The Government might find the elephant difficult to manage, and in fact it would have to find another purchaser. The property is probably a good one, looking to