

nothing more could have been justly expected from the Banks.

The prospect of navigation opening early always spreads a good feeling, and the large accumulations of grain, in the interior especially, justifies this, as business all round will become active, and money easy when returns come from these stores. The lumber and timber trades do not however yet approach their needed recovery, stocks are yet heavy, and the foreign markets are either well supplied or inactive. The English demand is, and will be small, as trade there is apparently entering upon a time of serious depression. The carrying trade has also a dull outlook; ocean freights will be low and light this season, not covering in some lines the cost of running and maintenance.

A review of the whole position only leads us to repeat our earnest warnings against continued expansion, and to urge the absolute necessity of steady curtailment.

#### IMPORTANT LAND TRIAL.

An important trial arising out of an auction sale of land, at Montreal, has been in progress during the week. One of the purchasers, Mr. McNaughton, refused to take some lots that were knocked down to him, on the ground that puffers were secretly employed by the vendors to enhance the price; and the vendors bring a suit to compel him to complete the purchase. The evidence proves that puffers were employed—bidders for form's sake as they called themselves—and the question will be how the law of Quebec regards puffing. In Ontario puffing on this scale would vitiate the sale. But there are other questions involved. The drift of the defence appears to be that this puffing had an ulterior as well as an immediate object. It was probable that the Government would require, in the enlargement of the Lachine Canal, part of the original parcel of land out of which the lots sold were taken. There was, in fact, a question of selling to the Government; and the prices obtained at a public sale would form a guide in determining what the Government ought to pay. The land cost the owners *en bloc* eight cents a square foot; and they name 30 to 35 as the price that should determine the Government purchases. A good deal of political feeling is mixed up with the law suit; because if M. Jette, or any prominent public man, could be proved guilty of having tried to obtain a fictitious price from the Government through the trick of engaging puffers at a public sale, great would be the scandal. In the present state of the case, we express

no opinion on the points raised, though we shall be ready to do so when the judicial decision has been pronounced. If the construction which some have attempted to put on the case be sustained, the scandal would outstrip anything ever dreamed of in connection with the Tanneries Land Swap, inasmuch as the thing was on a larger scale and the species of fraud insinuated of a blacker die. But we repeat, we do not intend to prejudge the case.

**PHENIX INSURANCE COMPANY OF BROOKLYN, N. Y.**—This company was organized more than twenty years ago, with a capital of one million dollars. Although the Company has paid for losses \$3,325,613 since the Chicago fire, in September, 1871, without calling upon its stockholders, it still has a surplus of \$1,183,956. The Phenix was licensed to do business in Canada in May last. Mr. John T. Douglas, who has had a lengthened experience as marine inspector of the Western, of Toronto, has been appointed general agent for Ontario for the marine department. The peculiar fitness of this arrangement will be readily perceived.

**SHODDY MORALITY.**—The British Nation had a shadow or rather a bright reflection from their solid honour and probity, which had spread over the whole commercial world; a reputation which they have now gone far to lose in making haste to be rich. We have begun to look upon money as the one only good, but the result of the wide-spread introduction of shoddy is, that everybody begins to recognize it and to suspect that the purest gold is but base metal gilded. Hence it is that in many markets German and Swiss manufactures are displacing the English goods. The money made by first trading dishonestly on a good name produces a fresh crop of shoddy turned out by one of the developments of the day, viz: "Joint Stock enterprise," a system which though it did not originate shoddy has largely tended to spread it and to undermine commercial morality. It has become a saying that "Boards" have neither souls to be saved nor bodies to be kicked; and the divided responsibility of a Board is so little felt to be personal by directors of Joint Stock Companies that they often act in their corporate capacity as they would feel ashamed to act in their own counting houses. The *British Mail* says:—

"The only remedy we have in this terrible prevalence of shoddy among us is, in the first place, to apply ourselves to our own business; we have but ourselves to blame if we are cheated by men who promise to make our fortunes by giving us 50 per cent. interest for our money, or to work for us for nothing. But among merchants and manufacturers are yet many whose honours and integrity deservedly stand as high as did ever the British name. These can be found, and a man who does busi-

ness with them himself, or who transacts it from abroad through a house which has a character to lose, need not fear the result. Without claiming for them too high a principle of abstract honesty, it is enough to say that these large houses of extensive business know too well the sound principles on which business should be conducted, and are too clever to make haste to be rich by betraying any trust reposed in them."

—On Sunday morning last B. H. Lemoine, Esq., died at his residence in Montreal. The deceased gentleman was for a period of nearly forty years connected with La Banque du Peuple, and for most of that long period was its cashier. Although for a few years past, age and infirm health had laid him aside from very active business, he was still at the time of his death a director of that bank, and an officer of various trusts. Coming from Quebec about the time of the rebellion, he soon became well known in monetary circles, and did much to give to the institution with which he was identified, the character for conservatism and stability which it still retains. His funeral was largely attended by bankers and business men, with whom he was so long associated.

—An important action, brought some years ago by the Bank of Toronto against the European Guarantee Association to recover \$16,000, the amount of a bond for which the Association had guaranteed the fidelity of the Bank's Montreal cashier, has been decided in favour of the Bank, by the British Privy Council, after being given against them by the Superior Court and the Court of Review for the province of Quebec. Mr. Munro, while cashier, engaged heavily in speculation in gold, and being intimately connected in this business with Messrs. Nichols & Robinson, brokers, allowed their account at the Bank to be largely overdrawn, while concealing the fact from the Head Office. Great losses ensued from these gold transactions, which the parties were unable to meet, and the Bank being exposed to lose a heavy deficit in the account of Messrs. Nichols & Robinson, brought action on the guarantee bond of Mr. Munro for \$16,000 with the above final result.

—At the recent convention of representatives of Life Insurance Companies held in New York, Mr. Jacob L. Greene, Secretary of the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company, was elected President. Mr. Greene's experience and position in the insurance world fully justifies the mark of confidence bestowed upon him.

—Contracts are let for bridging, grading and fencing the London, Huron & Bruce Railway. Of the portion up to Blyth, two sections are let to a Michigan contractor, and the other two are given to Wisconsin contractors. The road-bed is to be finished by the 1st August next.

—We are requested to correct an error in the government returns of the Aetna Life Insurance Company. The premium receipts for the year are put down at \$329,687, whereas the correct figures are \$339,687.