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A POSSIBLE BANK AMALGAMATION ?

The rumours which circulated in Toronto and Montreal last week-end regarding the imminence of a new bank amalgamation brought forth a statement by Mr. J. P. Bell, general manager of the Bank of Hamilton, one of the banks which rumour had associated with the move, that any announcement in regard to a proposed amalgamation was premature. Mr. Bell went on to say, however:—

"The Bank of Hamilton has been approached by the Royal Bank and several other banks, but in no case did we open the negotiations, as the value of the Bank of Hamilton is well known. No definite agreement has been reached although a tentative proposition has been made which is satisfactory to the directors of the Bank of Hamilton, but is, of course, subject to the approval of the minister of finance, the shareholders, and the governor-in-council."

It would excite no surprise if the Royal Bank is able eventually to make successful arrangements for the taking over of yet another banking institution. The enterprise and energy with which the affairs of this Bank have been directed in recent years are well known. Thanks to a judicious policy of absorption and a steady development of its own interests, both in Canada and elsewhere, particularly in the West Indies, the Royal Bank in the four years between the close of 1908 and the close of 1912 practically tripled its paid-up capital and raised its total assets from \$50,000,000 to about \$180,000,000. The absorption of the Traders Bank, of Toronto in 1912 enabled the Royal Bank to round out its Dominion-wide organization with a valuable network of branches in Ontario, but it is possible it may desire to consolidate further its position in that province. In the rich fruit-growing and industrial districts of which Hamilton is the centre, undoubtedly the Bank of Hamilton possesses exceedingly valuable connections. On many occasions in recent years rumour has redited one of the larger banks with the desire

to acquire the Bank of Hamilton's business, but hitherto, as appears from the statement made by the general manager, the offers made have not been sufficiently tempting.

The following are the leading figures of the two institutions referred to in the current gossip as at June 30 last:—

	Royal.	Hamilton.
Capital paid-up	\$11,560,000	\$3,000,000
Reserve	12,560,000	3,600,000
Rate on Dividend	12 p.c.	12 p.c.
Circulation	12,554,915	2,663,155
Total deposits	145,273,812	25,820,690
Specie	* 12,888,864	* 766,211
Dominion Notes	14,778,435	3,545,312
Canadian Call Loans	8,377,198	2,452,770
Foreign Call Loans	12,712,820
Canadian Current Loans	81,622,972	26,390,497
Foreign Current Loans	13,519,447
Loans to Merchants, etc.	3,167,500	2,148,907
Total Assets	187,270,254	45,839,918

*Including deposits in Central Gold Reserve.

With an amalgamation of this kind successfully achieved, the number of Canadian banks would be reduced to 21.

THE HOPEFUL WEST.

As the time draws nearer when the prospects of a very fine grain crop will be turned into actualities and cash, business sentiment in the West steadily improves. It is now reported that the wholesale houses at Winnipeg are looking for a good fall trade. Stocks in the country stores are reported to be very low, and with a satisfactory yield of fine wheat disposed of at high prices it is generally anticipated that they will require a good deal of stocking-up to meet improved demands. With the beginning of wheat cutting goods are reported as beginning to move out to the country centres. It may perhaps be hoped that the re-stocking will not be on too ambitious a scale and will only comprise absolute necessities so that debts can be paid off and capital steadily accumulated.

INSURANCE PATRIOTISM.

If at the close of the war an enquiry is held as to the services rendered by various sections of the community during this time of stress, we are certain the insurance business, as a whole, will stand well to the fore. Offices have readily granted leave of absence to men of military age, and have, in addition, guaranteed their positions and salary in the meantime. They have largely subscribed for the war loans; helped the Government where insurance and compensation questions have arisen; given war bonuses to clerks doing extra work, and, generally speaking, have taken a broad and serious view of their national duties.—*Policyholder.*

The directors of the Bank of British North America have resolved to declare, subject to audit, an interim dividend, payable October 8th, of 40s per share, less income tax, for the half year ended May 31st last, being at the rate of 8 per cent. per annum.