fore declaring the net profits, we observe, provision had been made for a substantial addition to the Pension Fund of the bank, and for the payment of a bonus to the employees, very suitable dispositions, both, of surplus profits—the bonus especially being welcomed by the younger members of the staff, while the Pension Fund accumulation is watched with interest by the elder. Considerable addition is made to the deposits, and circulation is increased. There is an enlargement of $613,000 in assets and liabilities compared with the preceding year, and the readily available assets are increased proportionately. The directors speak hopefully of the dissipation of the cloud of dullness that has for several years overspread our commercial horizon.

QUEBEC BANK.

An improved condition in the affairs of the institution is shown by the report of the Quebec Bank. Net earnings of $219,000 enabled the payment of an increased dividend of six per cent., and the addition of $100,000 to the Reserve Fund, which is now $600,000; and there stands at the credit of Profit and Loss the sum of $60,660. Circulation has again advanced, and there is an increase in the totals of assets and liabilities. Current discounts are larger; overdue debts, real estate and mortgages all smaller, while the amount of readily available assets remains about the same as last year.

Mr. R. H. Smith, who had been for some eight years president of the bank, resigned the post a short time ago, by reason of the state of his health. The report expresses the regret of the board at this step and high appreciation by his fellow directors of the devotion he displayed in the duties of that office. The gentleman now selected to the presidency is Mr. John Breakey, a new director, but a prominent and energetic lumber merchant. We observe that a resolution was passed by the shareholders desiring the directors and the general manager, Mr. Macdougall, to formulate a scheme for a pension fund to make provision for its retired officers and for the widows and children of deceased members of the staff—a very desirable arrangement.

THE LUMBER PROBLEM.

A strong effort has been made by a representative deputation to induce both the great political parties at Ottawa to confer on the Government power by order-in-council, to impose a duty on saw logs and pulp wood exported to the United States equal to that put on white pine by the legislative authority at Washington. It looks as if the authority in question might be granted. Sometimes, perhaps generally, export duties fall on the importing country: but here, by reflected action, there is reason to believe that the result would be otherwise; and whatever it may be expedient to do from a political standpoint, it is well to understand the economic effect of an export duty, under the circumstances. The tax would certainly decrease our exports of saw logs and pulp wood, and though the pulp-wood might go out of the country in another form, the export of white pine logs might be so greatly checked as practically to come to an end, and comparatively little of it could go out in the form of boards. To the extent that the American duty of $2 per 1,000 would decrease the exports of lumber, the export duty on logs would lessen the export of logs. Thus the export of both white pine timber, of the logs of the same wood, and of spruce for pulp, might nearly come to an end. The economical result would be that the balance against Canada in its trade with the United States, would be greatly increased, the price of these forest products would fall, and in this way the export duty would be paid, in part at least, by Canada; indeed, it is possible that the whole of it, or more than the whole of it, would fall indirectly on our shoulders. The burthen would have to be borne, not in the form of a tax, but in that of demoralized trade resulting from an attempt to collect a tax. The Americans who own timber limits in Canada could neither work them for export to the Republic nor permit them to lie fallow; they could only compete with Canada in markets outside of the United States, and in doing so the price of our own lumber would be reduced. But as power to retaliate is regarded as a defensive weapon, it would create no surprise if it were unanimously conferred on the Government.

CANADIAN FISHERIES.

An industry which adds to the national wealth twenty millions of dollars a year is well worth caring for. And when eight million dollars' worth of this is sold to other countries, we are still more impressed with its importance. The figures quoted apply to the fishing industry of Canada, which, always important, since even the days of the Basques and Bretons in the Gulf of St. Lawrence three centuries ago, have since the extension of the domain of Canada to the Pacific Ocean, become of vastly greater moment, for the richness of the Pacific coast fisheries has never been adequately told.

The last Blue Book of the Fisheries Department of the Dominion is before us, and we purpose making a brief *resume* of its more prominent contents. The statistics are all for the year 1895, a fact which we do not find explained. It is, however, stated that for 1896 the fishery operations in British Columbia were very successful, and exceeded the best previous record by nearly 700,000 cans. Of the 55 canneries in operation, 34 were on the Fraser River.

The fisheries of Canada yielded a product valued at $20,199,338 in the year 1895, according to the report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, which has just been received, or more than half a million dollars less than that of the previous year. All the provinces, with the exception of British Columbia and New Brunswick, show decreased returns. The output of the different provinces, with the increase or decrease, as compared with 1894, is shown in the following table. The figures are for 1895:

Provinces.	Value.	Increase.	Decrease.
Nova Scotia	$6,213,131	..	334,256
New Brunswick	4,403,158	51,629	......
British Columbia	4,401,354	450,876	....
Quebec	1,867,920	......	435,466
Ontario	1,584,473	......	75,494
Prince Edward Island	976,836	......	112,901
Manitoba and the Territories.	752,466	......	34,621

The falling off in the value of the fisheries of Nova Scotia is largely due to a diminished catch of sea cod. The coast fisheries gave poor returns, and the fishermen were not equipped for the deep-sea fisheries, where the cod was reported plentiful. The decline in the catch of mackerel is attributed to excessive purse seining by foreign vessels. The herring catch was good, and in a measure relieved the distress which would otherwise have prevailed in the fishing districts. The small gain made in the fisheries of New Brunswick is due chiefly to the smelt fishery, which, notwithstanding the severe drain of past years, yielded a million pounds in excess of the catch of the previous year. In Prince Edward Island, the decreased value of the industry was due to unsatisfactory results in the mackerel, cod, herring, lobster and hake fisheries. The Gulf division of the Quebec fisheries shows a diminution of 33 per cent. as compared with the previous year. By reason of the increased number of men and boats engaged in the fisheries of the Great Lakes, the industry in