BANKS' LOANS TO FARMERS.

That the small farmer is the person likely to benefit most by the permission given to the banks in the revised Bank Act to lend to farmers on security of grain is the opinion expressed in the *Teller,* issued by the Sterling Bank to its staff. The well established farmers of good character who own their farms subject to a small encumbrance will probably not be required to pledge their grain as security, banks being satisfied to loan on their own name. The small farmer, however, who has his farm mortgaged to the hilt, as well as other outside obligations, would only be able to borrow by giving his bank specific security for his loan, and this clause provides him with the means for giving such security.

FLUCTUATION IN GRAIN PRICES.

It is difficult to see, however, continues the *Teller,* what the farmer is to gain by holding his grain and borrowing against it. He is not in a position to speculate on the future prices of wheat, while the temptation may be placed in his way, and unless there are some big fluctuations in prices, he will gain but little by holding.

It must be remembered that Canada is only one of many producers, and consequently has to compete against the United States, Russia, India, France, Argentine and other large producers, so that prices are not ruled by the Canadian crop alone.

As an indication of how prices have fluctuated for 1913 crop, the following are the Fort William quotations: October, 83, 82, 81¼, 78, 82. The rush of grain apparently forced prices down, but it soon recovered. November fluctuated from 82⅛ to 84½; December, 82 to 83¼; January, 84 to 86⅜; February, 86 to 87.

COST OF HOLDING GRAIN.

Suppose, then, a farmer holds his grain until the end of February, taking, as an example, 1000 bushels. In October he could have sold this at 83, but he prefers to hold until February when he sells at 87, showing a profit of 4 points, or on 1000 bushels, $40. On the other hand, he found it necessary to borrow from his bank against this grain, $800 for five months; interest at 7 per cent. would amount to $25. In addition to this he would have to pay storage and insurance. There would also be a certain amount of shrinkage, so that in the end he would probably be no better off than if he had sold in October and cleaned up all his debts.

Another difficulty is that at present the Western farmer has no accommodation for storing grain, so he must either pay storage elsewhere or build barns at a considerable expense.

LIVERPOOL & LONDON & GLOBE INSURANCE COMPANY.

Mr. Lewis Laing, who has recently been appointed assistant manager for Canada of the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Company, and secretary of the Liverpool-Manitoba Assurance Company, arrived in Montreal this week to assume his new duties.

Mr. Laing has been for many years associated with the Liverpool & London & Globe, and was formerly sub-manager for Scotland. He is highly qualified for his new position, and will no doubt be a source of great strength to the management here.

WESTERN FREIGHT RATES CUT.

Making substantial reductions in western standard maximum rates, special distributing tariffs, through rates from east to west, local and westbound rates on grain and flour, coal rates in Alberta, special mileage rates on butter, cheese, eggs, dressed meats and dressed poultry, between prairie points; special mileage tariffs on vegetables in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and cement rates and rates on fence posts, fire-wood, brick, stone, gravel and sand in those provinces; as well as the rate on pig-iron between Port Arthur and Winnipeg, the Railway Commission on Wednesday afternoon, gave judgment in the long drawn out western freight rates inquiry.

While it made these reductions, averaging from 5 to 30 per cent. in the rates mentioned, the judgment left untouched because of their reasonableness the through grain rates and through rates on nearly all products westbound, rates on live stock, the special rates on fruits and vegetables from British Columbia, cement rates out of Winnipeg, sugar rates from Vancouver, rates on smelter products from the British Columbia mines and local passenger rates in British Columbia, all of which were an issue in the case.

As to what the average reduction made amounts to in relation to all western rates, the Railway Commission did not attempt to state and a member of the Commission stated it was impossible to say in view of the complicated character of the rates affected. An unofficial estimate, however, does not place it much higher than five per cent.

"ODDS AND ENDS OF FOREIGN TRAVEL."

Mr. George P. Morant, late fire manager of the Commercial Union Assurance Company, has recently published a volume with the title of "Odds and Ends of Foreign Travel" to which we desire particularly to call attention. Mr. Morant's duties in the responsible positions which he held for many years, carried him all over the world. Gifted with the faculty of shrewd observation of men and things, and a power of crisp and printed description, he has now issued this book of travel reminiscences. It is capital reading, instructive and entertaining, and the many who take pleasure in the perusal of travel literature will find the purchase of a copy an excellent investment. Beyond the inherent attractiveness of the book, there is a further reason why it should be purchased by Canadian insurance men. The profits arising from its publication are being given to the Insurance Clerks' Orphanage, a worthy object, so that the purchase of copies is not only a good buy in light literature, but also the means of aiding a thoroughly deserving institution Copies are now on sale at THE CHRONICLE office, and it is to be hoped that Canadian insurance men will not be behind those of other countries in their support of Mr. Morant's publication.

CROWN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY.

The Crown Life Insurance Company write us that the amount of net cash received for premiums in 1913 was $345,598. It will be noted that in the table published in THE CHRONICLE last week, the amount shown under the above heading was $268,950. This figure was furnished us by the Company in error, and included renewals only.