

In so doing we may, perhaps, say without egotism that they have consulted their own interest, for if there is one thing we desire the administration of the Bank to be distinguished for, it is, that we will loyally stand by those who stand by us, and support them through a trying period, even to our own temporary disadvantage.

There cannot be a more striking proof of this than the fact, that when, last year, we had offers of large amounts of business from firms of undoubted solvency in the United States, at far higher rates than prevailed in Canada, we refused them in every instance. Even when accompanied by the inducement of permanent accounts, we still declined.

We could have made a large amount of money had we chosen to open our doors to those offers, but we considered that the interest of our customers in Canada was our interest, and so steadily refused.

I am glad to say we were not alone in this.

The Banks generally acted on this principle, and the business community, and the country at large, owe them a debt of gratitude for their action.

A REVIEW OF THE PAST.

Some of you may have been present at the memorable meeting of the Bank in July, 1877, amidst circumstances of the very gravest embarrassment, not only as regards this Bank, but the whole country.

At a time like this, when matters have assumed so different an aspect, it may be well to take a brief retrospect of what has since transpired.

After the capital of the Bank was readjusted by act of Parliament in 1878, we had still to encounter a series of years in which the condition of the country went from bad to worse.

These were times of heavy depression, and a constantly increasing number of failures. The difficulty of conducting business during those years, none can conceive but those who had experience of it. The Rest of the Bank at that time was a very small sum. And it is a fact that the whole of the large fund reserved for Contingencies at the time of the readjustment of the Capital, was swept away by a constant recurrence of important failures and increasing depreciation