

The debt account is thus summarized:

The net debt of the Dominion at the close of the fiscal year was \$260,867,718, being a reduction from the previous year of \$739,270, the details of which are as follows:—

Allowance to provinces of Ontario and Quebec under 47 Vic., chap. 4, erroneously deducted last year.....	\$ 5,397,503
Capital expenditure on Railways, Canals and Public Works.....	5,832,953
Capital expenditure on Dominion lands.....	748,855
Capital expenditure on Militia.....	1,299,910
Railway subsidies.....	2,046,878
Bounties.....	1,130,041
Expenses in connection with extension of loan of 1874.....	184,783
Consolidated fund transfers.....	1,290
	\$16,642,614
Less—	
Surplus.....	\$15,05
Sinking funds.....	2,315,066
Refunds on account of Northwest Territories rebellion.....	2,616
Refunds South African contingents.....	6,818
	17,381,485
Decrease.....	\$ 739,270

The average rate of interest paid on the gross debt for the year was \$3.08, as compared with \$3.02 in the previous year, and the net-rate of interest fell from \$2.47 to \$2.46.

While the net debt shows a decrease of \$739,270 on June 30 last, yet in the operations of the year 1903-4 the actual reduction amounted to \$6,136,773. The difference is the sum as above stated of \$5,397,503 allowed to the provinces of Ontario and Quebec by 47 Victoria, chapter 4, erroneously deducted in 1903. Taking the two years 1902-3 and 1903-4 together the reduction of the debt amounted to \$10,961,371.

The highly important statement is made that, "With the increase in the circulation of Dominion notes and on the gold reserve held, the Finance Department in one respect is gradually assuming towards the chartered banks the position of the Bank of England towards the banks of Great Britain, that of the custodian of the reserve of gold, of which reserve on December 31, 1903, there was held \$28,204,884, and at close of 1904, \$35,306,822.

Mr. Courtney remarks:

"In order to attract and retain the services of good men for the effective performance of the higher class of work liberality should be shown in the emoluments offered, especially as able men are in demand throughout the Dominion and the openings for such are becoming more numerous every day."

The following shows the increases in the revenue and expenditure on Consolidated Fund Account since 1868:

Year.	Revenue. \$	Expenditure. \$
1869.....	14,379,174	14,038,084
1879.....	22,517,382	24,455,381
1889.....	38,782,870	36,917,835
1899.....	46,741,250	41,903,501
1904.....	70,669,816	55,612,832
Increase since 1868.	\$56,290,642	\$41,574,748

THE MONTREAL INSURANCE INSTITUTE.

At the monthly meeting of the Montreal Insurance Institute on 17th inst., Mr. H. M. Lambert was in the chair, in the unavoidable absence of the president, Mr. T. L. Morrissey.

Mr. P. Clinch, secretary of the New Brunswick Board of Fire Underwriters, read a paper on "The Sawmill Hazard." He described the conditions of such properties in past years which were such as to be exceedingly hazardous and to render the extinction of fires too slow to be of much avail. There are such saw mills in operation to-day, with which the less insurance companies have to do with them the better. Mr. Clinch advocated the erection of a higher class of mills with adequate fire protection, and rates reduced to encourage such improvements.

Mr. T. B. Macaulay gave "A Talk on the Specialized Mortality Experiences of 34 Canadian and American Life Companies," in which he dilated upon the mortality rates of different classes of person, in regard to occupation, weights, habits and physical tendencies. Persons of light weight were regarded more favourably than those inclined to obesity.

The Governing Council was announced to have decided that the choice of subjects for the Essays which will compete for the Prize offered by Mr. R. Wilson-Smith, be left to each competitor, each Essay offered to be judged on its merits, according to subject and matter. It is hoped that the subjects chosen will be of a practical nature dealing with the every day problems of insurance.

MONTREAL CLEARING HOUSE.

The Annual Meeting of the Bankers' Section of the Board of Trade and the Montreal Clearing House was held at the Clearing House, Bank of Montreal, yesterday.

The report of the retired chairman was presented, which comes too late for this week's issue.

The following gentlemen were appointed a Committee for the present year: C. W. Dean, Bank of Montreal; T. H. Mathewson, Canadian Bank of Commerce; W. M. Ramsay, Merchants Bank of Canada; A. E. Ellis, Bank of British North America; E. C. Pratt, Molsons Bank; L. DeGuise, La Banque Nationale; C. A. Bogert, Dominion Bank.

Mr. Pratt, of the above named Committee, was chosen as the representative of the banks for nomination as a member of the Council of the Board of Trade. It is also likely that their retiring representative, Mr. Mathewson, will be a vice-president of the same important body, an influential delegation having requested him to become their candidate.

Mr. John Knight, manager of the Montreal Clearing House, has favoured THE CHRONICLE with a copy of the yearly report of the London, Eng., Clearing House. Extracts from this report, printed elsewhere in this issue ought to silence those who are always predicting the speedy fall of the British Empire from its position of commercial and financial supremacy.