

ly as possible, instead of waiting for the period of probation to pass.

It is stated that throughout the discussion of the amendments the policyholders' interests were kept in view, and their safety was of primary consideration. The changes which the bill proposes to enact may not be quite so drastic as the circumstances seem to demand, but they indicate a laudable intention on the part of all concerned to steer clear of any great interference with existing contracts, and a desire to avoid infringing on the rights of present policyholders, or in any respect unduly hampering the companies. Under any circumstances, the life insurance interests of the Dominion will not have been jeopardized, even if the time for insisting upon a higher standard of reserves has been unduly extended, inasmuch as all companies will adopt the new standard as soon as possible.

CANADIAN BANK OF COMMERCE.

In presenting the thirty-second annual report to the shareholders of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, at their meeting on Tuesday last, the President, Hon. Geo. A. Cox, remarked:—

"It will be seen that the bank has shared very satisfactorily during the past year in the improvement in business which has been so marked throughout North America," and he added:

"The profits would have permitted a substantial addition to the Reserve Fund, but in view of the large expenditures made during the year in the purchase of properties at Winnipeg, Vancouver, Toronto, and elsewhere, on some of which buildings are being erected, the Directors decided to apply \$100,000 out of the year's profits in reduction of the Bank Premises Account."

Doubtless the shareholders will accept the increased net profits as very good evidence of improvement in business, and even if the reserve fund of the bank has received no part of the profits of the year, the surplus earnings, after payment of seven per cent. to shareholders, could not be used to better advantage than in reducing the somewhat heavy amount representing expenditure on bank premises. The net profits of the year amounted to \$542,802.96, being an increase of \$66,000 over the earnings of the preceding twelve months. After payment of \$420,000 in dividends, the balance sufficed to reduce the bank premises account by no less an amount than \$100,000; to increase the pension fund by \$10,000; and to augment the balance carried from last year by some \$12,000, making the amount carried forward to 1900, \$55,738.53. But it is not in the figures of the profit and loss account alone that we find indications of the "improvement in business" referred to in the report of the directors of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. The voluminous addresses of the

president and the general manager are fairly filled with elaborated facts and figures to show that Canada is enjoying a season of general prosperity. We find the president pointing to the plethora of money as a reason for hoping that action will shortly be taken by the Government to reduce the rate of interest paid to depositors in the Post Office Savings' Banks to 2 1/2 per cent. However, it would seem that the Canadian Bank of Commerce has found in expansion the means of obtaining employment for enormous deposits, the growth of same being illustrated by the president's statement that while the increase in deposits with the chartered banks as a whole for a period of two years is 27.85 per cent., the growth in the case of the Commerce is 47.62 per cent.

The address of the thoughtful and scholarly general manager, Mr. B. E. Walker, echoes the cheerful tone of the bank's president, and he does not hesitate to pronounce the present "an epoch in our commercial history." Even if we do not need a close analysis of the facts to tell us that we are prospering, Mr. Walker supplies the facts and figures for examination by those who doubt. He compares the present with 1883, and says:—

"We find that although our exports are sixty-six millions of dollars higher than in 1883, our imports are only eight millions higher, and we have turned a balance of trade against us of thirty-four millions into a balance in our favor of nearly twenty-four millions. In the railroad figures we find that the miles in operation have about doubled, and the traffic has a little more than doubled. Life insurance in force is nearly three times as great, and fire insurance has increased nearly sixty per cent. Deposits with the banks, the Government Savings banks, and the loan companies, have more than doubled, increasing from 147 millions to 311 millions of dollars, while the increase in bank discounts has been from 174 to 245 millions, or less than 50 per cent."

In reviewing the financial situation, Mr. Walker again expresses his astonishment at the apparent unwillingness of the United States to grapple with the matter of currency reform. Even if our neighbours do not give good heed to his words upon this question, some of our own people may well ponder upon his timely caution concerning another cause of alarm, the danger line in company flotation.

The statement and accompanying reports issued by the Canadian Bank of Commerce, which we publish elsewhere in this issue, showing increased earnings, largely increased deposits, and extended field of operations, combined with the extremely hopeful addresses hereinafter reviewed, must surely satisfy the bank's shareholders: and it cannot but be pleasing to a timid surveyor of the commercial and financial outlook to find that the general manager of one of our largest banks believes in the prosperity and growth of the Dominion, and is a follower of the true and amiable philosophy of optimism.