

upon 20 per cent. The premium income for life business has risen since 1890 from \$1,347,740, to \$2,090,610, an advance of \$742,870, or over 55 per cent. increase.

In the Annuity branch of the Royal the purchase money received for new annuities with the premiums on contingent annuities amounted to \$100,650, and the interest to \$46,000. Thirty-nine annuities expired in 1895, the annual payments on which amounted to \$7,095. After payment of all claims, annuities, bonuses in cash and expenses of every description, a balance of \$806,105 was added to the Life Funds, making the total accumulations of the Life and Annuity branches \$25,707,960. The increases in past few years have raised the Royal as a life assurance company into the front rank, so that, with equal progress continued for another year or two, this distinguished institution will, equally by its Fire and its Life business, take a pre-eminent position in the insurance world. However gifted a chief officer, as a General, or a General Manager, may be, he is incapable of achieving success, however full of genius his plans, if his sub-officers are not also highly qualified. The Royal owes much of its marvellous half century's success to the wisdom shown in selecting the Managers and Agents of its branches. To acquire such an office has long been the ambition of the more aspiring and talented of young underwriters,—indeed of elder ones. The Royal has had good officers, because it wanted the best in the market, and having secured them kept them by appreciation, though its service is very arduous. In Canada, Mr. Tatley built up a splendid connection. He has retired after eminently distinguishing himself as a Royal manager. We trust his ease with dignity will be prolonged far into another century. The business of the Royal in Canada gives it the leading position for volume of fire insurance in the Dominion. The gross amount of its fire risks taken in 1895 was \$55,887,125, the premiums thereon being \$683,682.

On Mr. Tatley's retirement and assumption of the dignity of Director, Mr. George Simpson was appointed as his successor, who had already won his spurs as Assistant Manager. The promotion of Mr. Simpson is a well earned recognition of his abilities and character; it is a very popular appointment. He will have the very valuable help of Mr. W. Mackay, who, as Inspector for a length of time, has proved himself a highly efficient, judicious, and courteous official. To both we extend our felicitations and best wishes; the interests of the Royal will be safe in their hands, and its progress continuous.

#### THE CANADIAN BANK OF COMMERCE.

The 29th Annual Report of the above Bank, presented to the meeting at Toronto on 16th June, with the General Manager's address, will be found in full in this issue. We need hardly bespeak it a careful reading, for whatever Mr. B. E. Walker puts his hand to, commands the utmost attention, and respect. The difficulties of banking in Canada since 1892 have been greater than for many years. One banker said recently: "During the past fifteen years I have not found the difficulty of keeping free from bad debts so hard as in the last year." An institution like the Bank of Com-

merce, with a paid-up Capital, Deposits and Circulation aggregating \$27,570,476, could not be run during such a time of depression at home, and of extremely harassing conditions in the United States, without having marks left upon it showing the severity of the storm it had been weathering through. Those sums represent a business equal to ten per cent. of the entire operations of the whole of the thirty-eight banks in Canada. The net profits made last year, "after providing for all ascertained losses," amounted to \$466,623, which exceeds those of 1894-95 by \$25,595. This is a pleasant feature, forecasting, as we trust it does, a turn of the tide of profit-making towards even a higher mark than any yet reached. During the past few years, in which two of the severest panics on record occurred in the United States, which had a disastrous influence on Canadian interests, there has been a depreciation of a certain class of the assets and collateral securities of all the banks, along with an increase in accounts which have risks of loss.

In order to meet these conditions, the Directors, after a careful re-valuation of the entire assets of the Bank, decided to appropriate \$200,000 from the Rest Account, to provide for all bad and doubtful debts. The purpose of a Rest, indeed the only justification for withholding profits from shareholders, is to do what has been done by the Board. The only wonder is that so small an amount was sufficient to provide for bad and doubtful debts. The amount is little over one per cent. of the active loans. If any merchant could make provision for such a class of accounts for double or treble that percentage, he would think himself very well off. The President pointed out that the Bank never before stood in so strong a position, the liquid Assets being about 60 per cent. of the Deposits. He foreshadowed an increased proportion of resources being invested in securities, which he hoped would bring greater immunity from loss. Mr. B. E. Walker, General Manager, opened his address by a sketch of the circumstances attending the business of agriculture in the past year, the depression of which had been chiefly felt in Ontario. Grain and hay crops had both been deficient, while prices for dairy products, cattle, pigs, and horses had been low. The home horse trade had been ruined by electricity, but a good export trade was being built up, a business, we may say, which will prove a failure unless farmers raise a good class of animals, as Britishers have no use for "plugs." The English cattle embargo, Mr. Walker truly called, "protection to British farmers." As to cheese, he remarked that we exported in the year ending 31st March 1895, 382,000 pounds, against 147,039,000 in 1894-95, the benefit of which was neutralized by low prices. Farmers are borrowing from the banks owing to short receipts, but are paying their mortgage loan engagements promptly, as well as their notes for implements. The North-West affords a strong contrast to this glowing picture, the crops there in 1895 having yielded 61 millions of bushels. The export of cattle, hogs, sheep and horses from Manitoba this year has been about 75,400 animals. In closing this section of his address, Mr. Walker spoke hopefully of the advantages of cold storage now