The inquiry must be thorough. No feelings must be spared. If the result of the investigations now proceeding means the financial ruin of any company, of any particular business or person, of any organization, all thoughts of business mercy must be buried beneath the word Duty. The commissioners endeavoring to gain some light on this catastrophe have a grave responsibility. They must know that the world awaits their verdict. These investigators are making history. And many are waiting to read the page they write.

## "PAYING THE PIPER."

There was once advertised a company, the chief charm of which was that none of the subscribers should know for what purpose the organization was promoted. The public's money flowed in faster than water and thicker than treacle. Which proves many axioms and makes one feel satirical.

We recently gathered some interesting announcements from the columns of the Canadian press. These were arranged in imposing array and photographed. The result appears on another page. Such a testimony to the credulity of human nature, when concerned with finance, is a novelty.

The more one sees of the literature, concerning gigantic financial opportunities for investors, the more puzzled one becomes. It is difficult to realize that people verily believe one dollar placed with a company, whose chief asset is its advertising manager, will be returned a few weeks later with interest at the rate of one thousand per cent. Indeed, we may expect to hear of dividends of one million per cent. Apparently cyphers count for little in the reckoning of certain concerns.

Before us is a story of a 20,000 per cent. dividend; that certainly is encouraging. Here is a company which asks, "Will you co-operate in building the mill and get a share in the big dividends that will be declared as soon as the company starts operations?" In order to assist the prospective investor to decide, the next paragraph says, "An investment of a few dollars now will be worth hundreds of thousands to you in a few years." This remarkable opportunity awaits exploitation in Chicago, but is widely advertised in Canada.

Does this concern really believe in what it preaches? But this is only one instance. We have similar geniuses in our own cities. Readers of the Monetary Times are acquainted with a few of these optimistic gentlemen. A vast number of people live in a fool's optimistic paradise, and they expect, in this sordid world of ours, to get something for nothing. Apparently the enterprising shrewdness of the financial spider, who weaves his attractive web to suck the monetary blood of the investing and trusting fly, is overlooked.

If you can get five per cent. for your money in these days you may consider bestowed upon you an average amount of fortune. If you can obtain anything up to ten per cent., you are still more fortunate. But when you soar to the realms of dividend payments of three, four, and five figures, it is time to think. Men who parade such absurd finance in our newspaper columns, should find a resting place in the penitentiary or the asylum. It is only their wits which save them. It would be well if confiding investors were blessed with a tenth of the ingenuity of the unscrupulous company promoter. The investor might then live in almost as regal luxury as the smooth-tongued vagabond who coaxes dollars as easily and cheerily as the pied piper of Hamelin charmed the rats.

## MONEY.

The fact that the New York city bonds were oversubscribed five times is cited as evidence of easier times in the money markets. While there are certainly signs of a lessening of the financial stringency, it is doubtful whether any substantial relief will be afforded for some time to come. It must be remembered that the bulk of the offers for the New York bonds were little above par, and the combined bankers' bid for the whole issue was close to par. This incident shows that money is to be had if the offer is very tempting.

It is said that the crisis has been passed, which is rather a premature utterance. The Western crop is now the foremost consideration. From all reports, it would appear that the total yield will be fairly satisfactory. But there is the fear of another transportation tie-up. If there is chaos on our railroads similar to that which existed last fall, a further strain in our money markets must be the result. The banks do well to maintain substantial reserves, even if, as has been stated, they will have over-estimated the amount required for the crop movement.

There does not appear to be much decided change in the monetary situation, although, with care, the future is hopeful. Whatever phase occurs to relieve the money scarcity it will come slowly. Its beneficial results will be recognized still more tardily. There exists no great gravity in the situation, but it does not appear a time for the relaxation of a cautiousness which has wisely obtained in financial spheres for some little time past.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

Railway directors will not consider the fist fight in the board room of the Illinois Central Railroad a wise example. If the New York story is true, the ex-president of the company gave the president an exceptional opportunity for closely observing the intricacy of the carpet pattern. The ancient provocation of being accused of undue economy with the truth, was apparently the commencement of the trouble. But the incident does not reflect upon directorial dignity.

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If you spend money on automobiles, yachts, and other such playthings, you cannot use it to purchase real estate, or to help some one to increase his factory accommodation. While not censuring anybody for the comparative lap of luxury in which the Canadian city lies, it would appear that extravagance is one very good reason for the prevailing Canadian money scarcity. Though this is not a blameworthy fact, it is well to remember that more baubles mean less business. Not that the Canadian business man does not deserve his pleasures. But it is a difficult feat to spend the same dollar twice.

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The city of St. John, N.B., proposes to appoint a harbor commission of three, a very proper step at a right moment. Canada has a valuable asset in St. John harbor. That its possibilities are not fully realized, are proved by the delay which is taking place in putting into being much discussed improvements. The harbors of Canada are an important factor, in the upbuilding of the Dominion's commerce. The proposed St. John harbor commission has, in Montreal, a notable example to follow. This latter port bids fair to become one of the most up-to-date on the North American continent. There is no reason why St. John should not aspire to some such similar honor.

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To the Monetary Times comes the annual report of a Manchester engineering firm in a sealed envelope franked with stamps to the value of three halfpence. On this communication we were required by the postal authorities to pay forty-two cents because of the sender's neglect. The amount of the fine does not concern us so much as the ignorance which appears to exist in Great Britain regarding not only postal rates for Canada, but other little methods which cast a slur on British business methods. A magazine recently came to this office franked with a shilling stamp. It could have come for one penny. Before English merchants can hope to improve their commercial relations with Canada they must study postal rates, Canadian geography, and adapt their