

PEOPLE'S LOAN AND DEPOSIT COMPANY.—From the report of this company we learn that the capital is now fully paid up at \$600,000. Both deposits and debentures show an increase. Repayments of loans during 1891 were \$270,501, while the new loans were only \$145,446; but the aggregate of mortgage loans was \$1,290,261 at the close of the year. The total interest accrued amounted to \$82,467, which sufficed, after paying interest on deposits and debentures, and running expenses, to add \$4,247 to Contingent account. The directors' report considers that Toronto being now well supplied with houses, the demand for money to erect new ones must necessarily be very moderate, and should be met with caution.

—The members of the Vancouver Board of Trade are a wide-awake lot of gentlemen. It has never been the custom of the commercial residents of that stirring place to hide their town's light under a bushel, and they are not going to begin now. At a meeting of the board held some ten days ago the secretary announced that a number of citizens had offered to pay for three months the sums opposite their names upon a list towards the expense of sending a man to Eastern Canada to lecture on British Columbia. Mr. Ceperley, however, did not favor this scheme, having a strong notion of the power of the press. He thought the board should rather pay the local papers for two articles a week describing the attractions of the place and province, the board to take a certain number of the papers containing these and circulate them "East." Mr. Skene thought that the province should have another representative in London than the present agent, with a more suitable office; and he sensibly urged that the agent appointed should make one trip per year to the province, to see for himself what is going on. The result of the conference was that a committee should confer with the subscribers mentioned, and decide upon the best means to further the interests of Vancouver and the Pacific Province.

—A copy of the report for 1891 of the Brandon Board of Trade has been sent us, illustrated by a view of the handsome new city hall. The Board has 45 members. Its president is Wm. Johnston; vice-president, E. S. Phillips; secretary-treasurer, J. F. Howard. The other members of council are: C. Adams, A. Kelly, A. C. Fraser, E. B. Smith, A. Jukes, D. G. Stewart, Thos. Thompson, K. Campbell, J. E. Smith, C. A. Moore, I. R. Strome, A. McLean. From the president's address we learn that 1891 surpassed any year since the town's foundation in the number of business places and residences erected; while the opening of the Brandon & South-Western, the N. P. and Manitoba, and the G. N. W. Central railways have been of the greatest importance to Brandon's trade. Approval is expressed of the Experimental Farm, as being of great advantage to Manitoba farmers. The location of the Indian Industrial School near the city, and the improved mail facilities on the new railways, are also mentioned as steps in advance. A public park and recreation ground are sensibly advocated.

—Commercial honesty, the *Dry Goods Chronicle* declares, always pays. Commercial lying is a losing business. Business men should always reflect before making positive promises to other business men whether or not they will actually be able to faithfully perform them; for a neglect to fulfil them often occasions great inconvenience and annoyance to the parties to whom they are made.

Meetings.

LA BANQUE DU PEUPLE.

Continued from last issue.

CASHIER'S ADDRESS.

Before reviewing the trade of this province in its various branches since the last annual meeting of the shareholders, I shall add only a few words supplementary to the annual report of your directors and to the remarks *in extenso* of the president on the affairs of this bank. Very little is left me to say regarding the business of the year, but to add that your directors have more than once felt anxious when looking at the dark prospects of general trade, to which our advances to the extent of nearly six million are made. You are all aware that for some time past the trade had a severely threatening aspect and it was necessary to act with caution and proceed under easy sail. Failures amongst our customers have been numerous, and losses involved have been pretty serious.

As the Profit and Loss account referred to by the president's remarks reminds the shareholders of an unfortunate period in the history of this bank, it is, perhaps, proper to place before the meeting some comparative statements of the most important items of our business at that period with those of this year. Taking the figures in the report submitted to the shareholders in 1885, we find in comparing it with the figures in the balance sheet of this year that we stand remarkably well. For instance, in 1885 our circulation was \$277,359, and stands now \$734,854. Our deposits were then \$1,305,868.37, as against \$4,001,993.70 in 1892, and the amount of our loans compares with \$2,765,284.39, against \$5,708,211.45 in 1892. As figures are positive indications of the enormous increase of our business during the last seven years, the shareholders ought to be satisfied that this bank has been entering on an era of prosperity, and the progress the bank is making, we feel confident, will continue under the careful management of your president and directors.

Our earning power is slowly and surely increasing, despite the fact that in these days competition is so keen that banking profits are not what they once were. Still, as I said, our earning power is holding its own, and holding it well, too, as our gross profits last year have exceeded 30 per cent. of our capital, and we are steadily increasing a very satisfactory class of business. Although the net results obtained have not been more, and, perhaps, have not realized your directors' anticipation, we must observe, if it is any consolation to us, that in this respect other banking institutions have suffered in the same direction. However, taking all in all, the movement in progress has been well maintained during the year. Our deposits, circulation and loans to the public compare with a material increase, an amount of \$55,000 has been added to the Reserve and the net profits realized have been fair.

General Review.—The trade in this province during 1891 was, upon the whole, better than at the outset the most competent observers were prepared to expect, although the year has been one of less than average business activity. Viewed as a whole, the year's business was distinctly divided into two parts, differing very materially in the sentiment prevailing and to a less extent in the results produced. Up to mid-summer, consequently the first six months, formed a period of depression, low prices and meagre profits. Those bad results were, however, to a certain extent anticipated in the early spring by those observant of passing events; unfavorable conditions then existing were apparent, the evils of which had to be felt in the near future. This arose from consideration of the fact that agricultural interests were in an unsatisfactory condition, owing to the bad crops in succession for the last three years and unhealthy expansion existing in certain lines of trade. From midsummer up to towards the close of the year, in all parts of the province, there has been a radical change in sentiment, and a most decided hopefulness in tone was felt in business, based almost entirely on the superb crop prospects of the Dominion, the report of failure of crops in foreign countries leading to anticipation of high prices for our cereals, with prospects of an immense surplus to export. The products of the soil last year far exceeded in abundance those of

any previous years, and most fortunately for farmers the heavy yield was not accompanied by low prices in the market, as is too often the case.

Although our crops have been abundant, never did the result of the harvest have so ineffective an influence on business interests through the country. With a surplus large enough that the marketing of it should have lifted the whole carrying industry up from a state of depression into a state of prosperity, and although we have been selling our products just as rapidly as we could hurry them to the seaboard, a fact evidenced by the amount of our grain exports, which, according to the report of the Montreal Board of Trade, were 15,261,000 bushels last year, as against 10,061,000 in 1890—in the face of all this, the business expectations have not been materialized, and although Stock Exchange securities were booming at times, general trade was dull, collections from rural districts bad, complaints from manufacturers down to retailers, general profits small, failures numerous and a reduced volume of business everywhere; and notwithstanding the large amount of money that has gone into the interior to pay for the big crop, enterprises were paralysed and industries stagnant. Such a condition of affairs following large crops and an unprecedented export demand, has not only disappointed but surprised everybody. Trade was naturally expecting an era of prosperity and the full benefit of a bounteous harvest, when, in its stead, a most disastrous crop of failures in every line and every district has taken place since January last.

In looking for the causes of such a disappointment in business, we trace first, that the crops have not been fully disposed of, and, second, that the first moneys that were sent to the interior have been devoted almost wholly to the payment of notes discounted in the banks and to the liquidation of mortgages and interest thereon that had piled up for the last three or four years on the land of the farmers; and these moneys, instead of going into general trade circulation, as was anticipated, have gone into the hands of capitalists and banks, explaining, therefore, the abnormal position of a plethora of money existing in the banks and complaints of small remittances, and the small demand of goods of all classes by the country trade. Money has been easy with the wealthy people. The trade of the province has then, as a whole, been poor, and results disclosed by inventories have shown that very little has been added by the commercial community to the capital of last year.

Failures.—We find the dark side of our trade revealed by the great number of failures. Business men were prepared, no doubt, for a very bad showing, inasmuch as the crops of the three preceding years had been bad throughout Canada, but it is probable, however, that the figures given by mercantile agencies are worse than generally anticipated, for the number of failures were greater even than last year and read as follows: In 1890, 653, against 690 in 1891, and the amount of liabilities has been \$8,397,583.07. Failures have to be expected every year, even in the most prosperous years; for immunity from failures will never be secured even if all the bankers' advice was to be followed; but when the failure list is swollen to the extent of that of 1892, one may really ask if, in a certain measure, remedies to check the increasing evils could not be applied. That too many merchants in almost every line crowd the field is very certain, and in years of poor returns when private expenditures have to be curtailed by every one, it tells hard on the surplus of merchants, which invariably must be pushed to the wall. The long credit system, sharp competition and too many men crowding the field, are as many evils, accounting in part for the above failures; but there exists actually another evil which is perhaps more injurious in a long run than any of those mentioned; it is the leniency shown towards those who assign. That sympathy and consideration should be extended to merchants having the reputation of good business men and well known honesty, who would, through unfortunate circumstances or acute depression of trade, have been compelled to assign, is only just; but to be lenient with a merchant whose incompetence as a business man has been clearly demonstrated by one or more previous failures or any other reasons, is a guilty practice which strikes at the root of sound principles of trade, and the results of